

John's Revelation for Today

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PROLOGUE

What Daniel sealed up (*Dan. 12:4*), what was hidden from the Apostles (*Jn. 16:12*), and what was hidden from our fathers in symbolic language is now being revealed in these last days of preparation. God will do nothing, but that He first will reveal it through His servants (*Amos 3:7, Matt. 10:26, Mk. 4:22, Lk. 8:17*). In this day when the Lord is moving by His Spirit to do a mighty work, He is revealing more of His plan so that His people might prepare themselves to enter into what has been reserved for the end-time of this age. He is speaking to this generation as never before through servants He has chosen. These are important messages that relate to the Lord's purposes and workings down through the present age, and to the climactic work which is about to come forth at the end of this age. These messages from the Lord are for those who have ears to hear, so they should be read prayerfully with much meditation and comparison with both Old and New Testament. Therefore, look to the Lord to make real what you read. Be sensitive to the quickening of His Spirit, and yield to the Spirit's urging to accomplish a further preparation in your heart and life.

The word "Revelation," *apokalupsis* in the Greek, carries the meaning to unveil, to uncover, to lift a curtain so *all* may see what is uncovered. **Revelation 1** states that this unveiling was given from God to Jesus Christ so that He could make these things known to His servants, and that the unveiling is on things to come, future to the day of its being written in 95-96 A.D. Therefore, we should expect a revealing and keep our eyes open for it. John had been exiled to Patmos, a volcanic, treeless waste of rock (a picture of much of the world at the end of God's final outpouring of judgment). He was there about one year. It appears from history that all the Apostles had been put to death except John (many more than 50,000 Christians had been martyred), but there is no record of John ever having died. John here is the same Apostle who wrote of the great love of God for all mankind, and who placed such great importance on that love being a living part of believers' relationships, one to another. In **Revelation**, John's mind has not been changed. In **Revelation**, he goes on to present the steps God must and will take to preserve and separate from the destructive work of Satan all those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ (*Jn. 14:21*).

As with most of the other books of the New Testament, **Revelation** is written for Spirit-controlled believers (volitional bond-servants) who know something of the patterns God always uses and some of His requirements, as well as some of His promises, and are willing to respond to God's revealings in faith. **Revelation** provides a guide to those believers who trust in Him wholly (those who are unwilling to become bond-servants will not fully understand) and is a warning through them to others. **Revelation** shows what God is doing and will yet do in these days to bring as many as will respond into turning 100% to Him. It declares a complete protection and great empowerment

for the dedicated remnant, of which you *may* be a part, so that the remnant can manifest the full glory of Jesus Christ and attract many (*Eph. 3:8-10*). It will be *His* glory that is manifested through the remnant, with power and authority, especially toward less dedicated believers and toward non-believers who will then be surrounded with great trouble and deprivation of material things as never before. What an opportunity and satisfaction for those who prepare!

Revelation is an integral part of the Bible. In its original language, it has the same numerical patterns in its words and sentences (the letters have numeric values) as does the rest of the original Bible. This is not a characteristic of the Apocrypha. **Chapters 1-3** show an unveiling of things involving the Church (Christian people), worship and preparation. **Chapters 4-5** show things in heaven, worship and preparation. **Chapters 6-19** describe things regarding the period we are now in and things in the Great Tribulation time of great sorrow and spiritual darkness on earth – paradoxically in the midst of great joy and spiritual light among those prepared. **Chapter 20** foretells the things of the Millennium, the 1000-year Sabbath of peace, and beyond. And **Chapters 21-22** relate things of the new heaven and the new and changed earth. This **Book** indicates that its contents refer to the future beyond 100 A.D. in **Revelation 1:1,3,10; 2:26-28; 3:8-10; 4:1**, etc.

Revelation 1

1 Things not made known to Jesus in His natural body on earth (some might reference *Mk. 13:32*) were made known to Him later when He had received His glorified body. And it was through John, the Disciple He especially loved, that Jesus chose to impart the revelation of the sequence of events at the ending of the ages, for guidance of all who love Him (*Jn. 14:23*). With reference to the unveiling of things of the then future, the Greek word for “soon, shortly, quickly” denotes a rapidity of fulfillment, once these events start, as with the birth of a child.

:2 John was a witness to all that transpired during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ (*Acts 10:41*) and is to be a witness of all those words and events again during the Tribulation (*Rev. 1:9*). An actual witness can only be one who was there, one who personally participated in some way.

:3 “Prophecy” is the Word of God spoken by another being and, in general application, its content may relate to the past, or present, or future, or in any combination. The *Book of Revelation* is prophecy through which is promised three blessings: to the reader and teacher, to the listener and student, and to the cooperative. No other Book of the Bible is so specific in pointing out the advantage of knowing and using its content.

:4 Although John was writing to specific assemblies in the seven cities, John was also writing for our application today (*II Tim. 3:16*) to the Church (seven symbolizing it and all of it) of the Gentile world (Asia), which is the developing Body of Christians up through The Great Tribulation. The Jewish Church and nation (Judah) is without a redemptive covenant of God until it cries out to Him again near the end of the Great Tribulation (*Matt. 21:43, 23:38-39; Mk. 11:21; Rom. 11:25; Isa. 64; Jer. 3:1-3, 30:6-7*) and so is not included with *the* Church here. The religions, the “other faiths,” never did have a covenant with God and so the letters are not for them either.

The number 7 is used often in the Bible and has a depth of meaning far beyond that of a surface reading. In *Revelation*, we see 7 Letters, 7 Churches, 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Bowls, 7 Lampstands, 7 Angels, 7 Stars, 7 Thunders, etc. In the Old Testament, the 7 priests with 7 trumpets, during the 7 days marching around Jericho, blew them 7 times on the 7th day. Naaman dipped in the Jordan 7 times. There were 7 days of the work of creation, and there are 7 days in the week. the 7th year of the 7th cycle initiates the year of Jubilee. There were 7 days before circumcision. The Millennium is the 7th of the 1000 year periods since Adam. The number 7 follows achievement and dominion, in measure, realized on earth, and therefore applies to rest from that which has been completed. It is the number of spiritual mindedness, or the seeking of attunement with God. It is the number of the Church on earth which is virgin to Christ.

In the *Book of Revelation*, there are 7 blessings (happy are those who):

1. to those who read this Book aloud, who hear, and who obey (*Rev. 1:3*):

2. to those who die *in* the Lord during the Great Tribulation (*Rev. 14:13*),
3. to those who stay alert, guarding their clothing of righteousness, having previously cleansed it (*Rev. 16:15*),
4. to those who are invited as guests to the marriage supper of the Lamb (*Rev. 19:9*),
5. to those who take part in the first resurrection – the fully prepared into heavenly rule, the almost prepared into earthly rule (*Rev. 20:6*),
6. to those who observe, receive in their hearts and obey the prophecy in this Book – heaven bound (*Rev. 22:7*) and
7. to those who cleanse their garments (put on righteousness) so they may approach the Tree of Life in immortality and enter the City (the Kingdom of people who will reign and rule with Him (*Rev. 22:14*)).

In *Revelation 1:4-6*, there is a 7 part salutation:

1. from Him Who is, was and is to come,
2. from the 7 Spirits,
3. from Jesus Christ Who is the faithful Witness,
4. from Jesus Christ Who is the Firstborn of the dead,
5. from Jesus Christ Who is the Ruler of Kings,
6. from Jesus Christ Who loves and frees us and
7. from Jesus Christ Who makes us a race of potential priests.

The 7 Spirits before the throne are the 7 Archangels or eyes of the Lord, having charge of the earth developments, for 7 denotes the fullness and completeness of the work of the Spirit in Christ. In *Revelation 5:6*, the Lamb has 7 horns (complete rule and authority) and 7 eyes which are the 7 Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. This is the fullness which is of His Spirit – of one Spirit, but with 7 works or facets to be found. In *Genesis 1:1-2:4*, there was one creation, but with 7 facets of the work. However, the pictures God presents often have more than one application. While the 7-fold Spirit in Christ is indicated in *Isaiah 11:1-2*, there are also the 7 Archangel spirits before the Throne who have charge of all the affairs of earth, under the Lord. They are the “eyes” of the Lord in the earth (*II Chron. 16:9, Zech. 4:10*). The same dual pattern applies to the 7 Churches, there being one Church, one developing Body of Christians in our time, but also 7 facets of the developing Church during the past 1900 years.

: 7 Represented initially by His Firstfruits soon to be born out of the woman Church, and then later in His own person, accompanied by His Harvest Host in a trailing spectacular of light and fire, Jesus Christ will be seen coming in the clouds, just as He was seen to go (*Acts 1:9-12*); He will even be seen by those very persons who pierced Him (a very interesting statement). By then, the Jewish people remaining in the land will be rejoicing, for they will have recognized Jesus Christ as their long awaited Messiah and earnestly call out, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*” (*Matt. 23:39*). When the tribes of the land (better translation than world) see His appearing, they shall all mourn. These are the tribes of Islam in the land; they mourn because by then they will have realized their accepted prophet was a false prophet and because they have lost all. At the end of the Great Tribulation when the Harvest Host is taken up, for most remaining it is too late for repentance and forgiveness.

The context of *verses 1-9* is the general time of His Second Coming which includes the Great Tribulation period, a period in which John is personally to share (see also *Jn. 21:22, Mk. 9:1*).

: 10 To receive this revealing of the plans and events of the end of this cycle of ages, John was supernaturally brought in the spirit to see and experience the Lord's description of the completion of the Lord's Day. In Scripture, the Lord's Day is variously called the Day of the Lord, that Day, the Day of Trouble, the Great Day, etc. (*Isa. 2:12, 13:9, 30:25-26; Joel 2:1, 11, 3:14; Amos 5:18-20, Zeph. 1:14-18; Mal. 3:2-4; II Tim. 1:12, 18; Rev. 6:17*). It is a great and glorious Day for those who previously have been preparing with diligence, but it is a Day of great trouble and even terror for Christians and non-Christians who have not. Each person can choose which sort of Day it will be for him.

: 11 The 7 Churches named here are *the Church, the developing Body of true Christians*, in all its components, beginning from about 100 A.D. and extending through the course of its development over the past 1900 years into the more intense period of fulfillment during the remaining few years of this age, the time we are now in. The announcements and the warnings are for all persons of all times (the war trumpet of *verse 10*), but they are of primary interest *to us* in the end-time application. The 7 Churches are as the 7 Spirits of God, a completeness in union with different facets, one Church becoming attuned to God in 7 stages of development (*I Cor. 12:13*). The number 7 is that of Christ's Church and portrays those of His true Body coming into the fullness and completeness of what He has purposed.

: 12-15 The One like the Son of Man is Jesus, clothed from head to foot in clothes of righteousness. The gold of His girdle denotes Spiritual impartation, tried and proven. The whiteness on His head is that of full maturity in righteousness, and the flashing eyes speak of penetrating perception. Bronze or brass is often used as a symbol of the carnal nature of man, but here it is refined and transmuted, cast into the image of Jesus Christ, and flowing under the direction of His Spirit; it also denotes wisdom. *Ezekiel 1:24* uses similar language in speaking of the Almighty and the sound of many waters (His voice directed through the many nations), and we are familiar with the picture of rivers of living water issuing from Jesus.

: 16 The 7 stars in His right hand are the 7 angels (7 heavenly beings and also 7 earthly ministries) assigned to the total and complete operation of the 7 Churches. The sharp, two-edged sword is the Word of God (*Isa. 11:4, Eph. 6:17*). Its two edges are the Testimony of Truth and its prophetic proof; the exceedingly bright shining is the power of God (*Ex. 34:29, Matt. 17:2, Jdg. 5:31*).

: 18 Jesus has overcome Death and Hades, the unseen realm of Satan (*I Jn. 4:4, 5:4; II Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15*), and we are to be blessed with all the blessings God gave to Jesus (*Eph. 1:3, Jn. 16:15*) – if we will follow Jesus wholly.

: 20 Jesus was then still in control of the ministries of His Church in the Apostolic period, holding the 7 stars in His right hand and walking in power in the midst of His people, but He can support, restrain, or withdraw His ministry in its several aspects. He is now still walking in power in the midst of His people; but He is not manifesting the living Word nor the power as He desires, because His people are yet unwilling to give Him *all* the glory (unwilling to complete *His* assignments). He requires honesty and He will share the glory that is His with no man (*Isa. 42:7-9, 48:9-12*). He is holding in His

right hand (control) certain special ministers of His choosing, who are now being prepared for a mighty work. But so many of His ministers are yet unwilling to let Him hold them completely, having many desires and ambitions of their own. So by His Spirit, He is hovering over them, longingly waiting for the time when once again He can exercise full control and be Head over all that is His. This time will come shortly, for none will be able to thwart His purpose; and those who have been prepared shall rise up in power as *ONE MAN* fitly joined together as Christ's Body, ready to fulfill their destined calling in this end-time. So shall the perfected Lampstand then shine with light from the oil of the Holy Spirit (*Zech. 4:1-6*).

It is to the specific Angel of the Church that each of the 7 Letters is addressed. The 7 Stars in Jesus Christ's right hand are the 7 Angels and the 7 Lampstands are the 7 Churches (although His Church is the one Church). The 7 Churches portray the 7 eras or epochs of time from the Apostolic Church to the end of the age. The mystery of the 7 Angels, in its first application, shows these are 7 heavenly beings who have been given charge over the Church's development during this 2000 year age, one over each of the 7 eras. In its second application, the 7 Angels or messengers are 7 men who have been raised up with a special commission and message for each of the 7 Church periods. Each of these men has fulfilled his commission and the 7th and last has finished his work. This means a new era is at hand, and the Lord is now raising up messengers to bring His people into the truths and powers of the new day. So do not look back to the past, nor to any of the messengers of the past, but receive what the Lord is making known through His chosen messengers of the new day. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit, not man, is saying to the Church.

The Conditioning

The Lord said to *Habakkuk* (2:2-3),

"Write the vision plainly upon the tablets that everyone who passes may be able to read as he hastens by. For the vision is yet for an appointed time and it hastens to the end fulfillment; it will not deceive or disappoint. Though it tarry, wait earnestly for it, because it will surely come; it will not be behind time on its appointed day."

So many people "run" while they read, reading to satisfy curiosity about what some man has to say, how God is moving "over there," or reading to engage in some speculative gymnastics with what might come in the future. This accomplished, little further thought is given to what has been read. The material being presented here will do very little good, unless there is sufficient study and meditation, in thorough association with the Bible and especially its patterns. The Holy Spirit must be given opportunity to illuminate deeply into the inner consciousness, causing the truth to be "born" in the heart. The truth then assimilated and incorporated into the very fabric of the soul, becomes as a fire in the inner being (*Jer. 20:9*). Do not take these truths lightly; do not cast them aside after one casual reading. Slow down and meditate, looking to the Holy Spirit to illuminate and make real your comparisons with the truth in God's whole word. Above all, take your Bible and read carefully and meditate on all Scripture references and passages mentioned. Let our Lord's Word become a fire within to penetrate and purify, consuming all dross. Let Him prepare you as a vessel to hold His glory, lest that same Word be a fire of judgment to precipitate into loss and grief.

We see many references in Scripture which tell when the appointed day of God's glory is to come, and now even non-Christians are observing that there is an appointed day in which man alone can offer no remedy for his abuse of himself and his environment. That day of appointment may seem to be put off or deferred in God's mercy, but it is being fulfilled according to plan (*Heb. 10:37*). In these times, many are being given a vision of what the Lord is now doing and of what He is going to do through an end-time remnant which He is calling out of the man-controlled church systems into His Divine order for His Church. The vision is first a yet-to-come revolution in New Testament ministries, gifts and spiritual operation of the Body of Christians under the exclusive headship of Jesus Christ. That "house" must be built by the Lord, or those who build it labor in vain (*Ps. 127:1*). The vision takes shape as an initiation of the grand finale of this age; the Great Outpouring of His Spirit upon this *prepared* Body on the day of Pentecost so that a great Harvest might be brought forth to the Lord (*Acts 2:17-21*). A new era is about to dawn. The Day of the Lord is now at hand. A second Pentecost is soon to break upon the world, resulting in the beginnings of the Glorious Church and a spiritual revolution such as the world has never seen; but first a preliminary and preparatory work must be done in the pattern of the ministry of John the Baptist (*Matt. 3:1-3*). A Firstfruits company must come forth; a remnant must come out

of today's "Babylon" and prepare the Way.

As the ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way of the Lord for His first manifestation and ministry (*Isa. 40:3-5*), there is another and more complete fulfillment of the pattern preceding the second manifestation of the Lord when He comes again in power and great glory (*Lk. 21:27*). Every valley (the poor and lowly) shall be lifted and filled up, every mountain and hill (the proud and self-righteous) shall be made low, the crooked and uneven (religious vanity and deceit) shall be made straight and level (simplicity and integrity) and the rough places (hindering tactics) a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and *all* flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. The full glory of the Lord is to be made manifest at His *Second Coming*, because it can hardly be said that all flesh has already seen His glory together, though there were some who saw the glory of the Lord in the person of Jesus (*Jn. 1:14*). Therefore, a voice ministry is now going out in the latter-day "spiritual Israel" of the nations of Christendom to prepare the way of the Lord for His second manifestation. Again it can be said after almost 2000 years that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. God enacts His plan by drama and placement as well as by Word, and in doing so He conforms all things to a basic pattern.

At the earlier time, John was the voice crying in the wilderness – a spiritual wilderness outside of the Promised Land of Kingdom blessing and fullness. At the earlier time, Jesus followed John's ministry and proclaimed "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel" (*Mk. 1:14-15*). Those of that earlier time had a chance to enter in and see the promises to Abraham fulfilled and the earthly Kingdom fully established, but they refused to accept Him (*Jn. 1:11, Rom. 11:7*). However, a remnant 120 obtained the promise in part on the day of Pentecost (*Rom. 11:5*) when the Holy Spirit was poured out to establish them in a position of spiritual blessing and power. Afterwards the Gentiles were added to the elect company (*Acts 10:44-48*). Subsequently, the early Church failed to maintain the spiritual estate in which it was established; neither did it press in to fully possess the ground given to it "in Christ." Even before the death of the Apostles a general declension had set in to eventually lead the Church into the "wilderness" of spiritual impoverishment. Then the Church sold herself to the State, losing all her power. In spite of periods of spiritual refreshing, the Church has been and still is in the "wilderness" outside the fullness of spiritual blessing and power so evident at the beginning.

So now there are those whom God has raised up to be again a "voice in the wilderness" of religious confusion, sectarianism and apostasy, because again the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The crossing over of His saints into the Promised Land, first in spiritual power on earth and then in translation glory, is nigh; and the full establishment of the earthly Kingdom also is nigh. To prepare "the way" is to prepare a people who will turn from their ways to God's ways (*Lk. 1:16-17*), and this calls for repentance (a turning) and a revolution (to the way). This people (a Firstfruits remnant) who turn wholeheartedly to be established in His way then themselves become "the way" to multitudes during the time of the great Harvest. The Greek word translated "restoration" (*Matt. 17:10-13*) means a going-away (*apo*) from the man-appointed conditions of government (*katastasis*), and the "restoration" is actually a revolution into God-rule and righteousness (*Matt. 6:33*). The "voice" is to be that of the spiritual revolutionist, preaching rule by God within the human heart and in the affairs of the nation to bring righteousness within the heart and God-rule in all things. The "voice in the wilderness"

is now crying for the abandonment of all man-made ways, man-perpetuated religious systems and denominations and all man-appointed heads of churches. Christ alone shall reign supreme in the heart of the individual, in the affairs of His Church and in the affairs of the nation. *Our ministry* is to call out a remnant which will repent and turn from the ways of man to receive God's order and rule for its life and all its ways.

The voice of *one* crying portrays a pattern of oneness or unity, not many voices, but one voice (*Gal. 1:8-9*). These people made ready and prepared for the Lord (*Lk. 1:17*) are to become one Body in the Lord (*Eph. 4:3-6*) endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There should be no rivalries, jealousies or sectarian spirit among those moving out in this last day message and ministry, but one Body readying itself to operate in a Divine order with each ministry and each member of the Body functioning as the Spirit directs and in subjection to Truth in one another (*I Pet. 5:5-7*). Personal objectives or ambitions must be replaced by the desire to see the Lord increase in the Church which is to become His Body (*Eph. 1:22-23*) as each member develops in his or her ministry.

Each must be willing to decrease in order that Christ might increase in the whole Body (*Eph. 4:15-16*). The "Highway" for our God (*Isa. 40:3*) means a raised up way so that when the time comes for many to return to God in the great impending Harvest, they may see and know the way because it has been prepared before them through people who have been forerunners. The Lord would have us prepare a High Way in the desert of spiritual desolation. If we, as the daughter of Zion, will be faithful to seek Him and obey Him in all that He has shown us, then He will do the work; and the time will come when we shall be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord . . . Sought out, a city not forsaken, His dwelling place in His people (*Isa. 62:10-12*).

In the earlier time, John exhorted the people to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and to give up their reliance on a physical connection through Abraham, because God is able to take the stones and raise up children of Abraham in whom to fulfill His promises. He warned that the axe is laid to the root of all trees so that every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire (*Lk. 3:8-9*). The axe is now laid at the root of every man-made denomination and religious system, and all are going to be "cut down" and cast into the "fiery" Tribulation which is coming on all the earth. God's call to those who have ears to hear (to conform) is to repent and come out of religious Babylon so as not to become partakers of her sins *and* her plagues (*Rev. 18:4*). Say not to yourselves, I believe this is where the Lord wants me to be – in a church with traditional teaching. Boast not in your physical or religious pedigree. Say not within yourselves that you have Abraham (or some Catholic or Protestant denomination) for your father, because God is able to raise up children of Abraham from the stones. That is just what God *is* doing! He is raising up, shaping and smoothing "living stones" (*I Pet. 2:5-6*), lively stones which are to be built together upon the uncompromised foundations of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone. In Him the whole building is fitly framed together to grow into a *holy Temple* in the Lord (*Eph. 2:20-21*).

There is so much that God would like to reveal to man, but He perceives that we are able to receive only a little at a time. The concepts taught by the churches are so completely contrary to His Word that He must give us the beginnings again and teach anew. This is the day in which He is restoring to His people the Truths that have been almost

totally obscured by the traditions of man. Therefore, keep your heart open for more of the revelation of the Spirit.

God is moving by His Spirit to bring light and revelation from His Word as never before. Surely we are living in the time spoken of by Daniel the Prophet:

“But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Then many shall run to and fro and search anxiously, and knowledge shall be increased.”

Daniel 12:4

The time of the end of this age is upon us and, therefore, we are witnessing the unsealing of what have been mysteries to past generations. Knowledge is increasing both in the natural, physical realms of man and in the realm of the spiritual things of God.

The availability of increased knowledge does not mean that we should be gullible and accept everything we hear and read, but rather weigh it with a discerning mind, seeking to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good (*I Thess. 5:21*). Above all, we should heed the admonition in *Isaiah 8:20*, ***“If their teachings are not according to this Word, the Law and the Testimony, it is because there is no Light in them.”*** The Word of God is always to be our Standard. However, we must continually be willing to *re-study* and *re-examine* what we *think* the Bible teaches, realizing that many of our past concepts have been the result of limited capacity to understand, as well as resulting from a lethargy and insensitivity in our hearts not permitting the looking beyond the veil to view the full glory of the Lord. As the Jews had a veil of unbelief on their hearts (*II Cor. 3:13-15*), not being able to look and see the end of the superseded Old Covenant, so have we had a veil on our hearts, preventing recognition of the consummation of the New Covenant *now* being fulfilled.

When Moses came down from the Mount after spending 40 days with God, he had to put a veil over his face, because the people were unable to view its shining glory (*Ex. 34:29-35*). Thus has it been through many generations. Christ has been speaking to man through His Word, but much has been veiled because of our inability to comprehend and receive. But now the veil is being lifted and more and more of the Lord's glorious light is shining out as He reveals or unveils Himself to men in these last days.

God must deal with us as we are, for much depends upon our *heart-willingness* to receive and live truth. Jesus said, “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine (research it to be sure), whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself” (*Jn. 7:16-17*). We must be willing to re-study and re-think all that we have ever believed, and then live in the truth. If our hearts are too lethargic for us to admit that we have made mistakes and have been in error in many things, and change our thinking and act accordingly, the Lord will have to leave us where we are and continue to veil much of His truth from us.

Along with heart-willingness, the soil of our heart must be broken up and prepared to receive the good seed of His Word (*Mk. 4:20-28*). The Lord many times has to condition us by experience before we are ready to receive more light and understanding. The Lord's word to us is “Break up the fallow ground . . . and circumcise yourselves (cut off the “flesh”) to the Lord” (*Jer. 4:3-4*). As Jesus spoke to the Disciples on the road to Emmaus, He perceived their lack of readiness to receive and spoke to them,

“O foolish ones and *slow of heart* to believe *all* that the Prophets have spoken” (**Lk. 24:25**). And thus it has been ever since; we are such foolish ones and we have been so slow to believe all. Is this not true? Are we willing to be honest with ourselves, and are we willing to let the Lord deal with our hearts until we are conditioned to behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord?

Jesus said, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”** (**Matt. 5:8**). Our seeing of God (comprehending His reality and truth) is in direct proportion to the “circumcising” of our hearts. The lethargy and insensitivity of our hearts has to be cut away, lest it be fulfilled in us as it was in the Jews of Jesus’ day (**Matt. 13:15**). God said to Moses who wanted to see the Lord, **“You can not see My face, for no mortal shall see Me and live”** (**Ex. 33:20**). What is true in this statement physically is also true spiritually; in the carnal self-life we cannot live – if we are to see God. The more we wish to see of God, the more of our self-life has first to become ineffective (die).

There is no occasion for boasting when we realize that God has had to hide us in the cleft of the rock (Jesus) and has had to cover us with His hand of mercy while He has passed by, and we have seen but a little portion of His Being (**Ex. 33:21-23, Col. 3:3**). But the more we are willing to die to selfishness, the more of His glory (light and truth) shall be revealed to us. Increasingly we shall see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (**II Cor. 4:6**).

What is being presented in this volume is with the realization that as yet we know in part and see through a glass darkly (**I Cor. 13:1-12**). All of us are still walking in some error, but we should desire above everything to know the truth, for the practice of the truth is what shall make us free (**Jn. 8:31-32**). One truth which we should all be willing to confess is found in **I Corinthians 8:2**, **“If any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.”** Yet in regard to some things that may be new to us, we may have to follow the example of Mary who kept all these things and *pondered* them in her heart.

Possibly one more thought should be added. What about our heart motives? Jesus said, **“He who speaks from himself seeks his own honor, but he who seeks the Sender’s honor is sincere and in him there is no deceit”** (**Jn. 7:18**). If we are seeking our own honor in one way or another, then we can be sure that what we speak tends to come out of ourselves, but if we have no ambition or desire except to seek the honor and glory of the One Who sent us, then out of a sincere heart will come that which is without deceit.

But who can honestly say that he knows his own heart perfectly, and that his motives are completely without any taint of self? We can only pray that God will keep us free from the beguiling influences of our own deceitful hearts, and from the corrupting desire to please others. None of us is immune to the wiles of the evil one in his attempt to inflate our ego and infuse us with the spirit of those at Babel, “Let us build . . . let us make a name *for ourselves*” (**Gen. 11:4**). If we want to keep hearing from God and speak only that which He would have us speak, then in us must be fulfilled the words of **Isaiah 66:2**, **“I will look favorably upon that man who is humble, feels crushed in spirit, and trembles (moves) at My Word.”**

In this study, most of the material has been taken from current revealings (the Lord’s unveiling of what He has already given to the saints – not man’s unveiling). But God speaks only according to the Scriptures; therefore, let *each* reader exercise his God-

given responsibility to check and try this prophetic material with all of Scripture and thereby obtain confirmation from the Holy Spirit of its validity (*I Thess. 5:19-21*). The fact that it has been so checked and tried by others does not relieve the responsibility on each reader (*Acts 17:11*). Nor does the checking lift a subsequent responsibility to yield in loving conformance – if the words are found true.

To enter this study of God's plan for His people, particularly in these concluding days of the age, it will be necessary constantly to *rightly* divide the Word of Truth, in order to bring no shame upon the workman (*II Tim. 2:15*). Right dividing in the Greek means to cut straight and distinguish between the various portions of Divine Truth so that the cut pieces will fit together in one harmonious whole – as is so necessary in tent-making. Let us look at an example which will help to clarify much of the study which follows.

The promise of *Romans 6:23* speaks of the “gift” of God which is eternal life. In *Philippians 3:14*, we find the offer of the “prize” of the high calling. Do these passages refer to the same thing? Can the initial salvation, or eternal life for the soul, be both a gift and a prize? Many Scripture portions show that there is a prize to be *won* as well as a gift to be *received*. Instead of making God's Word contradict itself, let us fit each portion of truth into its proper place in the Divine scheme and let the fitting produce one harmonious whole. To rightly divide the Word there must be a distinguishing between the salvation or preservation of the soul which is a gift of God and the high calling which is something to be attained. The same word “prize” used in *Philippians 3:14* is also used in *I Corinthians 9:24* where it is defined as a reward such as is won in contests of athletic prowess. Not all that run the race win the prize; therefore, you are to run so that you might obtain it. In these passages (*I Cor. 9:26-27, Phil. 3:12-14*), Paul then expresses his own apprehension of failure to obtain the prize. A well-matured Christian is here running for a prize which he is not automatically certain of winning; but in *II Timothy 1:12* Paul speaks with complete assurance of God's ability to keep what is committed to Him for that day. Does not a right dividing of this Scripture bring realization that these words speak of Paul's certainty of initial preservation (eternal life) *and* his realization of something else which he has *not yet* attained and which would require all his energies and devotion if he is to attain (*Phil. 3:11-14*)?

The prize which Paul was so eager to attain is referred to as the “high calling” or “upward calling” (*Phil. 3:14*). It is an invitation to come up higher and is in harmony with the statement in *Hebrews 3:1*, “*So then, brethren, set apart for God, partakers of the heavenly calling.*” It is a call or summons to attain to the glories of heaven. All who have received initial salvation are partakers of and associates in this heavenly calling, but all must give diligence to make the calling and election sure (*II Pet. 1:5-11*). Surely this calling is not the same as the *gift* of eternal life for the soul which is the present possession of every ‘born again’ Christian. A distinction is made in *II Timothy 1:9* where Paul speaks of God Who saved us *and* called us with a holy calling, the two ideas being joined by the conjunction “and.” Also in *Romans 11:29*, Paul speaks of the gifts *and* the calling of God, indicating they are not the same.

If heaven is a prize to be won, then necessarily the gift of eternal life must provide only for *restored* life on the same plane on which it was lost the earthly. Adam was on earth, not in heaven, when he forfeited deathless life (*Gen. 2:8,17*). The prize involves being joint heirs with Christ in His own (heavenly) realm, to reign and rule with Him

over the earth (**Rom. 8:17; Rev. 5:10, 20:6**). Therefore, those saved ones who fail to qualify for this “calling” *must* come back to earth in the coming Kingdom Age to live in deathless physical bodies. The fact that many saved ones are now in the realm called Paradise in no way indicates that they will be a part of that coming heavenly Kingdom as co-heirs and co-rulers with Christ. Paradise is an intermediate state of bliss for departed souls who have been saved, but it is no way synonymous with the glories of the coming Kingdom of Christ where those who have overcome will rule and reign with Him. Resurrected Life back to live on this earth is to be the lot of many saved ones, *until* they have fully entered into all that has been planned for them. Then at some late date those also shall be translated into the heavenly realms, and they will operate no longer in an earthly but in a glorified body. God shows partiality to no person (**Rom. 2:11**) and there are no shortcuts and no steps to be skipped by any man along the way of preparation leading into glory. What was required of Paul is required of every man who is to join Christ in His heaven.

The prize is a high calling (**Phil. 3:14**), a holy calling (**II Tim. 1:9**) and a heavenly calling (**Heb. 3:1**). “High” indicates lofty or elevated and, in type, the high calling would be symbolized by the top or summit of a mountain raised up above the ground level of the plain. Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai would typify the high calling (**Ex. 19:10-24**). “High” also means difficult to comprehend, or great price, or greater price than usual. Therefore the high calling is not for easy-going, self-indulgent Christians; because a *price must be paid*. Paul knew the price – a total renunciation of the things of the world system so that he might gain Christ and, if by any means, might attain to the resurrection out from among the (saved) dead (**Phil. 3:7-11**). He refers to the *first* resurrection of those who will reign with Jesus Christ (**Rev. 20:5**).

“High” also means elevated in rank, condition or office. Those who attain to the high calling are to receive positions of authority and rank far above those who enter the earthly Kingdom. They shall have part in the first resurrection and shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him 1000 years over the earthly Kingdom (**Rev. 20:6**). Of the Apostles Jesus said, “You shall sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel” (**Matt. 19:28**). Those made priests and kings shall reign *over* the earth (**Rev. 5:10**), shall judge the world and shall judge some angels (**I Cor. 6:2-3**). Those of the high calling are to be elevated above many of the angels!

The calling is not only high, it is also holy (**II Tim. 1:9**). Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (**Heb. 12:14**). “Holiness” means separation in spirit from the things of the world system. The Israelites delivered from Egypt and on their way to Canaan typify the Christians of this age who have been delivered from the pollutions of this world and are on their way to the heavenly Kingdom. God gave numerous and detailed laws to teach the Israelites separation (holiness) from what defiles and makes “unclean.” God said repeatedly, “You shall be holy (separated), for I am holy” (**Lev. 11:44**, etc.). “I am the Lord your God Who has *separated* you from other people” (**Lev. 20:24**).

All these things happened to them for examples (types) and were written for *our* admonition (**I Cor. 10:11, II Tim. 3:16**), as physical demonstrations of spiritual principles. Therefore come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, and *I will receive you*, says the Lord (**II Cor. 6:17**). He Who has called you is holy so you be holy in all your manner of living, because it is written, “Be holy for I am

holy” (*I Pet. 1:15-16*). The portion of the Church which is to become the Bride of Christ is to be *presented to Him* a Glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; it is to be holy (separated) and without blemish (*Eph. 5:27*). Certainly most Christians have not yet attained to this kind of holiness and are not yet ready for such a presentation to Him.

The calling is also a heavenly calling (*Heb. 3:1*) and the prize of the high calling is heaven itself, the heavenly realm or Kingdom which is being prepared for those who *love* Him with all their hearts and being (*Matt. 22:37, Jn. 14:21*), and who are *being perfected* into His likeness (*Matt. 5:48, Eph. 4:12-13, Rom. 8:29*). Since flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (*I Cor. 15:50*), it is evident that those who do enter are to be clothed with bodies commensurate with the heavenly realm. Because our citizenship is to be in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ will fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory (*Phil. 3:20-21*). There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies and the two differ in glory (*I Cor. 15:40*); there are natural bodies for the earth and supernatural bodies for the heavens (*I Cor. 15:44-49*). The New Testament repeatedly speaks of the entrance into the heavenly realm by being glorified or entering into glory (*Rom. 8:17-18*). This indicated adornment and beautification, far surpassing earthly glory, is that glory with which Christ was adorned after the resurrection and transformation of His earthly body (*Lk. 24:26*). Those glorified with Him are to become like Him (*I Jn. 3:2*). Surely it staggers our imagination to contemplate just how high, holy and heavenly this calling is!

Though this prize is something to be attained, it is not something achieved through our own effort or merit alone. It is Christ’s glorified seed within, the hope of glory (*Col. 1:26-27*); it is the *power* of His Spirit (*Acts 1:8; II Pet. 1:3,8; I Pet. 1:3-5*) dwelling within which enables one to overcome the world system, even as He overcame and entered into glory. He now lives to make intercession for us (*Rom. 8:26-27*), but only those who have *allowed* the Lord, by His Spirit, to do a perfect (complete) work in them (*Phil. 1:6*) can hope to be joint-heirs with Christ (*Rom. 8:17*) in His own (Heavenly) realm. How many “good” Christians are lulled into the lethargy and slumber of the “foolish virgins” (*Matt. 25:1-13*), because the Word was not rightly divided to them. They think it is only required of them to believe, be baptized and live a fairly respectable life – and a mansion in heaven awaits them. Many are called, but few are chosen (*Matt. 22:12-14*). Many saved ones are called to His Kingdom and glory (*I Thess. 2:12*). Only a few *give diligence* to make their calling and election sure (*II Pet. 1:5,10-11*). We need to live in the joy and assurance of our initial salvation (preserving), but we also need to press on toward the “prize of the high calling.” Therefore, He said, “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead (the ineffective) and Christ will give you light” (*Eph. 5:14-16*).

The Seven Letters

REVELATION 2

It was Jesus Christ, the First and the Last, Who spoke through His special messengers to the early Church. In the same manner, He now speaks of His will and His purpose for this hour in human history to the Church through special messengers. He speaks to make known that which is recorded in the Scriptures, for He speaks only to unveil what has already been delivered to the saints (*Jude 3*). He speaks to the Church of our generation through His seven Letters to the seven Churches in Asia. Seven is the number of His Church and the seven Letters present a prophetic picture of the course of His Church throughout the dispensation now drawing to a close. Therefore, hear and, by the Spirit of Revelation, Jesus will anoint your eyes to see the full meaning of what has been written for your admonition (*I Cor. 10:11*). This is the day in which all things pertaining to His Church are coming to a consummation, and before long the final Trumpet shall sound the call to battle. During the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, the mystery of your God shall be finished and only those prepared by Him shall be able to stand victoriously and help bind the power of Satan's fury (*Rev. 10:7*).

Ephesus

:1 The Church at Ephesus (Ephesus means "desirable" or "permissible") is the only one of the seven to which the apostle Paul also addressed an Epistle. This is significant, showing that this later Letter from Jesus Christ to Ephesus portrays, by symbolic representation, the condition of the early Church in the Apostolic period. In that period He was in control, holding the seven stars in His right hand, and so He is shown walking in power among those of the Church, the seven golden lampstands.

:2-3 The glory of the Apostolic Church is seen in the words of commendation for those of the early Church who were vigilant against evil which corrupts, and against false, though sincere, apostles sowing seeds of error. But they were lax in guarding against the intrusion of interests that attract attention and affection (desire) to the extent that the love for Jesus Christ was no longer the primary, all-consuming focus of their lives.

:4 Therefore, He speaks a warning, because they have left their First Love, their primary Love.

Here is the key to maintaining freshness and vigor in Christian life, as well as vitality and power in the Church. Jesus must ever be the object of your love and adoration; no person nor any thing is ever to become more important in your life than Jesus Christ. Your primary concern is not to be doing things *for* Him, but outpouring your love *to* Him as you spend much time in the secret place of meditation on the Word and lift up your praises to Him (*Isa. 60:18, 62:10; Ps. 100:4*). A primary occupation with doing things *for* Him in works and labors centers attention on what is secondary and, as in the

early Church, brings danger of leaving the first or primary Love (in the Greek, this means primary in time and also in nature – best).

Those in Ephesus had done many good works, but they had gravitated into what was right in their own eyes. They are pictured as sincere and well-intentioned, but as soon as and as long as they gave themselves to what seemed right in their own eyes, that long the Lord's perspective took second place. He said, "do what is right in *My* eyes" (*Deut. 6:4,17-18*). He also said they had some overcoming to do. The overcoming was to be an absolute, utter overcoming of the illusions of the *senses*, that which honest conscientious people *desire* to do within the permissible. Although permissible, these things are not best in God's sight; thus they hinder the filling out of His plan for His loved ones.

Live in His love, let it consume your very being; then the labors will indeed be great and worthy. The labors are to be a demonstration of love worked out, not merely the attempt to gain something, whether it be praise or recognition in the sight of men, or God's favor and reward. He cares not for your works as such, no matter how well intentioned; He prizes highly that which represents love poured out in conformance and faithfulness.

:5 Remember, therefore from what heights we have fallen – and repent. The works in operation are those which are right in man's sight. The primary or best works to return to are those right in God's sight, the works of obedience demonstrating love, because those that love Him keep His commandments (*Deut. 12:8,28; Jn. 14:21*). When the early Church began to get its eyes on labors and works, no matter how well-intentioned, forgetting to look to Him in conforming love, it was told to repent. That Church did not heed the warning; its lampstand (light) was removed, and the glory and power of the Apostolic period began to wane, until it ceased to shine.

:6 For one more attribute He commended the early Church; they hated the works of the Nicolaitans, which He also detests. The Nicolaitans were Satan's agents. Nicolaus of Antioch is reported to have worked to increase the size of the Church by introducing compromise! The Nicolaitans were of Christian origin but compromised with pagan ritual, including immorality, and emerged to claim true spiritual leadership. They were those who slyly sought to elevate certain leaders above the people in such a way that they gradually assumed sacerdotal importance, even as the priests of the pagan religions. These followers and promoters of false prophets are likened to Korah (*Num. 16:1-10,28-32*) who aspired to advance himself from the position of Levite to the authority of Moses and Aaron, as the sacerdotal leader of the people. But Korah was recognized for what he was. In the early Church, these efforts were clearly detected in the false followers and promoters. The true saints refused to be misled by those who sought to replace spiritual authority with authority appointed and enforced by men. If God's people in this day are to enter into His purpose and receive the glory awaiting, they also must have the spiritual perception to discern between the false and the true and detest the works of the Nicolaitans. The true ministers do not need the carnal ways of man to fulfill their calling. And the Lord holds us accountable not to be deceived by even "good" and sincere men who would exalt and promote the flesh of men as a substitute for true spiritual authority and power. As a too obvious example, Union Theological Seminary built up its reputation as being one of the best in the business, but it was there that the "God is dead" teaching was hatched. But who is dead (*Ps. 14:1*)?

What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of the Lord (*Lk. 16:15*).

:7 There were those who rose above the waywardness and were sensitive to the wooing and leading of the Holy Spirit; they had ears to hear. He who overcomes may eat of, or from, the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God. In a limited application, the promises to the first three of the seven Churches apply to the 30-fold category of believers, those who have come into a recognition that Jesus Christ is someone special and well might be the Son of God sent to deliver the world from its bondage to selfishness. However, the second and third lead more into the 60-fold and 100-fold respectively. A part of the potential offered to the 30-fold is that of becoming 60-fold (“born again”), through a measure of overcoming. The full potential is that of carrying on the overcoming into immortality (soul and then physical). The eating of the Tree of Life has to do with the preserving and storing of Christ’s life-force in the human seed. These are overcomers in measure because of fidelity and obedience to the Word, overcoming a laxness toward seeking Jesus Christ and His will first. The Tree is also Christ’s own life and righteousness imparted to those who receive Him in faith (*Prov. 3:15-18, Jn. 5:24, I Cor. 1:30*). The fruit also speaks of joys and blessedness to those who have so yielded in love and obedience that the fruits of righteousness, the fruits of the Spirit’s working in their inner being, are brought forth in profusion. The Tree of Life is within the faithful Christian just as the Tree of Life bearing its fruit is in the midst of the Paradise of God. This Paradise is the “garden” of the human body in which Divine life is at work, watered by the Word and the Spirit, and quickened by the warmth of reciprocated love (*I Cor. 3:9, Lk. 8:5-8*). Each of the seven promises is conditioned on overcoming and the degree of overcoming.

The Ephesus type overcomer strives his utmost to overcome what man calls “life.” God and His plan for man’s well-being must become his absolute priority in all matters. This overcomer lives for Christ by living for the good of others; he strives to share the joy in Light and Life with others.

Smyrna

:8 Smyrna means “suffering.” Following the Letter to Ephesus, it symbolizes the next historical period after the Apostolic, that of the great persecutions under the Roman emperors. Many saints were martyred in those days and, for that reason, the salutation has to do with life for evermore. It is the assurance that as Jesus was the first in the New Covenant to die by the hands of persecutors, so He would be with all who had to lay down their lives for His Name’s sake, even to the last one (*Isa. 41:4*). And even as He was made alive after death, so He would quicken to life all who laid down their lives in death – first in the realms of the soul and then finally in the resurrection of the physical body. All those of the Church also shall attain by presenting themselves as a living sacrifice (*Rom. 12:1-2*). Sacrifice means giving up many things and many values, and on the Altar they are consumed. We die to all things in order to be made alive as He is. We give up perhaps some good things in order to have the good and the hurtful replaced with the best. The *living sacrifice* is God’s way of making martyrs in the cause of Christ for a full overcomer’s life, but many will not submit wholly, and so may lose their lives as man-made martyrs.

:9 During the intense persecutions by the Roman beast, many Christians found themselves in great poverty; it was common practice to confiscate all belongings of

those who would not deny their faith. However, they were rich in faith and spiritual truths. The persecutions were carried out by the Roman powers, but in many instances the persecutions were instigated behind the scenes by Jews scattered throughout the Empire, who, although claiming to be physical descendants of Abraham, were not “true Jews” or Israelites indeed according to the Spirit of faith (*Rom. 2:28-29*). Having rejected the Messiah and having sinned against great light, they became blinded captives of the enemy, Satan, and thus active enemies of all Christians. Their blasphemy was in the claim of being the Almighty’s chosen, although not in truth or righteousness. Yet they have been preserved as a people for a purpose soon to be fulfilled at the close of the age.

: 10 So great was the persecution that untold thousands of saints suffered imprisonment, many into death by torture at the hands of men and by savage animals. The ten days are symbolic of ten great persecutions that rose and receded during a period of over two centuries, and in the end-time are symbolic of a short period of time.

Throughout Scripture, we are confronted with the use of numbers in such a way as to cause us to think and endeavor to get onto the track of the Lord’s thinking. While a confrontation with death would certainly be a testing of most people, it should not be for dedicated Christians. A ten-day jail term would hardly be a testing for anyone. The message here must carry more information than that. If the light of the work day of our Lord Jesus Christ in His Father’s business was from age 12 to 33, the daylight period was 21 years (*Jn. 9:4-5, 11:9*). The full 24 hour “day” was then 42 years. The ten days measured on that scale total 420 years. It was 1564-1567 that saw the acceptance of the Protestant principles by most of the northern European nations. But a year is as a day to the Lord (*Ezek. 4:6*). Therefore, in the short-term intense application, these 420 days would be the period immediately preceding the hour of testing on all Christians with the mark of the beast during World War III. The 420 days would begin 206 days after the Firstfruits are taken up. Then about a year and two months later, World War III. More detail on this will be given in the study of *Revelation 9*.

Also, ten is the number of worldly power. It portrays the completion of the soul cycle during which the shelter of the 30-fold or the life for the 60-fold, received into the souls of those persecuted, was tested and proven through the “fires” of opposition, engendering later completion into “life crowned.” All who possess a shelter or eternal life for the soul, are subsequently to attain to that for the body also.

The crown of life promised to those faithful unto death is life on a higher plane of attainment. The crown indicates rule, instead of being ruled over. Life crowned must therefore be life immortal, absolute Life, having overcome the rule of death. Here it is not life in a glorified body, such as that of Jesus Christ, but an undying body on earth for functioning in the earthly Kingdom up to thousands of years, until glorified. It goes beyond the gift of eternal soul life. For 60-fold partial overcomers (the regenerated) who do die, it is a resurrection into immortality which is the ultimate on earth, short of glorification, for those who love the Lord and keep His commandments (*Lk. 20:35-36*). In its full sense, this is God’s promise of a sweeping fullness of Life through a negation of death. In this second promise, the “2” refers to a striving to develop discernment and then volitionally choose the good which is life producing for self and for others.

: 11 A promise of assurance is given in this Letter to those who overcome, even in measure. There are degrees of overcoming pictured by there being seven special prom-

existence continues on and on, even though they have lost all!

Pergamos

: 12-13 Pergamos means “the heights” and represents the period of Church history following the lifting up of Christianity as the State religion. The Church was married to the State of the Roman Empire early in the fourth century. It represents a period of great spiritual decline and ascendancy of man-controlled apostasy in a gradual process. Many still held fast to the Faith and did not deny Jesus Christ, but others became so engrossed in counterfeit forms of church life that the very seat of Satan became entrenched within the growing church structure. It was a period of increasing contrasts and conflict. Earlier, Pergamos had become the center of Satan’s Babylon-type, emperor worship after Babylon fell. Later, the practices and authority of its “spiritual” rule was officially transferred to the Roman State by legal and political means in about 133 B.C. (pp. 240, 241 “The Two Babylons”), and made the province of the Bishop of Rome (later, the Pope) about 378 A.D.

We are to be judged by the Word of God and He wields the sharp two-edged sword which will separate those who wholly believe. The Word is the measuring line (*Rev. 11:1-2, Isa. 28:16-17*) and all must come into God’s measurements before leaving the Altar (*Rev. 6:9-11*). When the Word of God has gone forth, all who hear must follow the evaluations of God as to how they are walking in the light of that Word. Antipas means “against the fathers” – against the government “where Satan dwells.” Antipas represents those who remain faithful against all and resist the encroaching apostasy. The fact that he was slain speaks of the power of entrenched authority to “kill out” the resistance of those who continue to stand for pure and unadulterated Christianity. The rapidity with which Satan established his seat within the organized Church structure was a direct result of the Church-State marriage. Because the union constituted spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness to Jesus Christ, He withdrew His favor (blessings) rapidly.

: 14 Jesus likens the development to the doctrines of Balaam, who was a true prophet subsequently corrupted by desire for material gain. He sought to unite the “world” with the called-out ones (*Num. 22-25, 31:16; II Pet. 2:15*). He promoted compromise with heathen religious practices (with the Moabite women who brought in these practices), in order to secure what he wanted. Balaam becomes the type of ambitious leaders who increasingly cause the people to “sacrifice to idols,” by introducing many pagan (unscriptural) beliefs and practices and by leading people into further “adultery” with the state. They cause the “arm of flesh” to rise in strength and dominate the affairs of the Church, bringing a reliance on the world system (*Jms. 4:4*) and on wealth (*Matt. 6:24*). About 315 A.D., the clergy began to receive salaries out of the State treasury.

: 15 Not only did the doctrine of Balaam become firmly entrenched during this period, but the compromising doctrine of the Nicolaitans also grew rapidly. Thus the works of the Nicolaitans among a few (*Rev. 2:6*) became in this period an established doctrine. Increasingly, the ministers’ positions took on sacerdotal importance, having been fashioned after the priesthood of the pagan religions. More and more power was put into the hands of fewer, as a hierarchy of authority began to grow. (God says each is to advance in His way, by His love and by serving all – *Matt. 20:25-28*.) The ground work was laid for complete carnal usurpation of Christ’s spiritual authority in a counterfeit form of Christianity, its nadir being reached in the next period.

:16 Because of the trend to apostasy, Jesus Christ's words are spoken as a sharp sword of judgment and of corrective discipline. He will fight against them with the sword of His mouth, unless they repent. The sword is a symbol of division or separation (*Lk. 12:51-53*). This He does by raising up many faithful servants to denounce the false teachings and practices of the power-hungry clergy who increasingly make merchandise of the people to further their own ends. When the era of this Church came to a close, a darkness which almost totally eclipsed the light of Truth had engulfed the Christian world. For several hundred years, there would be only slight glimmers of light among small groups of faithful followers, here and there (500-1500 A.D.). Truly the night had come when no man could work effectively (*Jn. 9:4-5*).

:17 But for those who would hear, He promises hidden manna and a white stone with a new name on it. Literally, this is a "pebble" or baby Stone, generated by and delivered out of the massive Rock and destined to grow until it fills the entirety of the individual's microcosm Kingdom (*1 Pet. 1:23*). The dynamic of the "pebble" within is to strike fire against man's imagery and reach out in passionate adoration (yes, soul desire) of the Father-Rock and His beauty, in an ecstasy of joy to truly worship at His feet. The baby stone is from the glorified body of Jesus Christ who Himself is the colossal Stone, cut out without human hands (virgin birth). This massive Stone will fall upon and wholly crush the man-developed "image" (*Dan. 2:34-35*). If anyone falls on the One Rock and it is buried, in order to worship the image of *Daniel 2:44-45*, total loss is suffered when the colossal Rock flashes down upon the image (*1 Cor. 3:15, Matt. 21:44*). There will be contest or friction as He streaks through to crush all having no part in Him, and there will be vengeance in flaming fire (*II Thess. 1:7-8, Matt. 24:30, Jn. 14:30*).

The Ark of Testimony was a type of Jesus Christ in His incarnation and glorification, and the manna which sustained the Israelites in the wilderness was placed and hidden within the Ark. Jesus proclaims He is ready to reveal hidden mysteries to those who are ready to receive (*Matt. 13:11, Jn. 6:35*), since all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him (*Col. 2:3*). Both the second and the third Letters picture the dire need of all who have recognized the Savior to enter into the security of Life. The hidden manna was described as that Life-force coming down from God. When contained within the golden vessel (Spirit control) and placed in the Ark (also symbolizing the human heart), it did not "die." In a limited application, it is that life in the conditioned human seed, which when "eaten" can equip one for receiving undying soul life. In its further application, it is that undying Life seed from the glorified body of Jesus Christ which flushes a permanent life force through the human soul. In yet a further extension, it is the life immortalizing the physical body. In all cases, a measure of whiteness in righteousness is brought to bear on that life. A new set of character traits is in the building process, resulting in a "new name." All this is to fulfill for the 30-fold coming toward Jesus Christ, if he continues on and into the 60-fold "born again" status and the 100-fold Spirit Baptism level, in each fold's respective "new creations" or transformations. As control of thought is added to control of emotions and carnal pulls, there can be that knowing selection of what is for the ultimate good in the spiritual perspective. These promises pose the goal of reaching and moving into the 100-fold Holy Spirit Baptism.

Overcoming is individual, not vicarious (*Rev. 2:4,14-16,20; 3:2,4,16,18*). It is the eradication of the personal defects as seen by God. Overcomers are always privileged

ises to the overcomers in the seven letters. In a limited application, the promises here apply to the 30-fold category (the first through the 30-fold). Therefore, the promise of “no second death” is contingent upon continuing into the 60-fold category (31 through 60) and it is directed at those who will work to reach the 60-fold *estate*. That measure of overcoming is by the constant screening of emotions as well as the carnal and death producing pulls of the outer life. The full application brings immortality. The assurance here is for those who go beyond the initial believing in Christ’s vicarious atonement for their sins. The escaping of the second death is possible only by being “born anew” by the incorruptible seed (**Jn. 3:3-5, Jms. 1:21, I Pet. 1:23**). When Christ’s very own Life is imparted to the soul, it is forever free from death, and the eventual restoration of the physical body is also assured, if that body has been laid aside in death. The second death has to do with a future judgment day, but those who have passed from death to life (**Jn. 5:24**) remain secure and they shall have no part in the activated “Lake of Fire” which brings the second death for both body and soul (**Matt. 10:28, Rev. 20:9-15**).

In **I Thessalonians 5:23**, we read that man is spirit, soul and body. The spirit is the very substance of God; God is a Spirit (**Jn. 4:24**). He is the Father of all Spirits (**Heb. 12:9, Num. 16:22**), and He forms or presses the spirit of man within his body (**Zech. 12:1**). God made the physical body of dust of the ground, breathed into man the breath (spirit) of lives, which generated a living human or soul (**Gen. 2:7**). God is not an earth creature, breathing air, and so we must understand that God here exuded out of Himself a portion of what He is (Spirit). In the Hebrew, the same word is used for breath, or wind, or spirit. God first formed or fathered the spirit which was later to be placed in the physical body of Adam or members of the Adam race. When there, it became the spirit of lives (plural in the original Hebrew) and there was generated in man’s physical body a soul. The spirit placed within animated a two-fold life or a two-fold garment: the outer physical body and the inner “soul body.” When the spirit, fathered by God, is placed within the unborn fetus, its powers take of the living substance within the developing organism and form a vehicle called the soul. The soul becomes a means of expression through the physical, the personality, the mental-emotional volitional nature. Since the soul is sustained by the life-forces of the physical, it is subject to death as is the physical body (**Ezek. 18:4,20**); so both soul and body need to be saved or preserved. The soul is of a highly tenuous substance which cannot normally be seen, but it is just as much a vehicle or body for the spirit as is the physical body and can function on celestial planes of being after separation from the physical body. This is why the soul needs to be saved or preserved from death.

At the death of the physical body, the human spirit is released to the unseen realm (the meaning of Hades) within and around our earth, the realm ruled by Satan (**Eph. 2:2, Jn. 12:31**), still sheathed in the soul garment. Those who are saved are immediately transported beyond this realm of Hades to the realm called Paradise, symbolically described as Abraham’s bosom in **Luke 16:22**, where they continue to live and enjoy God’s blessings, fully clothed in their preserved soul garments. No man yet has gone to Heaven except Jesus (**Jn. 3:13**). **Revelation 6:9** shows that the souls (spirits fully clothed in soul garments) of those who died are under the Altar, waiting completed redemption and resurrection (**Rom. 8:23**) at the time of fulfillment of God’s plan. The symbolic earthly Golden Altar was always outside the Holy of Holies, God’s presence (**Ex. 30:6,10**), except on the Day of Atonement (**Lev. 16:12,30,34; Heb. 9:4**) (see footnote in Amplified Bible). The prophetic Day of Atonement is at the end of the age.

Those who are not saved remain in Satan's realm of Hades and are in torments (**Lk. 16:23**), torment of mind in grief over their folly and also torment of the "flame" which they experience as their soul bodies gradually disintegrate, the life forces slowly abating. This torment is not torture, but the pain of mental anguish and the discomfort of the disintegration process.

With its garments or bodies lost, the spirit becomes naked and has no function. Even the thought of not having a physical body garment for the spirit was an abhorrent one to the Apostle Paul (**II Cor. 5:3-4**). We read in Scripture of spirits in prison or confinement (**I Pet. 3:19**); these were spirits which had lost both body and soul. Other Scripture speaks of saved ones as "souls" (**Rev. 6:9**). When a soul is not saved or preserved from death, it also dies or disintegrates after the death of the physical body, leaving the spirit naked. After the soul body is fully disintegrated in Hades, the naked spirit is released from that place to ascend to God (**Eccles. 12:7**) and to then be confined to await resurrection. Scripture does not say just where the released spirits go, but in some way the naked spirits are restricted by God until the day they are to come back to earth and be re-clothed in resurrection bodies, with soul bodies again reformed within the physical. This return is for all who have seen physical death, both saved and unsaved, but saved and unsaved have different destinies (**Jn. 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, I Cor. 15:21**). Therefore, humbly receive the implanted Word (seed of Christ) which is able to preserve your souls (**Jms. 1:21**). What does a man profit if he gains the whole world and loses *his own soul* (**Matt. 16:26**).

In the final "Lake of Fire," Gehenna, Jesus warns that both physical body and soul will be utterly destroyed, but nothing is said of the spirit being destroyed, for it is of the very substance of God (**Matt. 10:28**). A spirit needs garments or vehicles for its growth in understanding and for continuing progress in the plan and purpose of God, both during life on earth and during life through eternity; therefore, death of either body or soul is a tragic loss for the spirit. It is important for the soul to have been saved or preserved from death, but it is vital to attain the redemption and deliverance of the physical body from death also. Gehenna refers to the Valley of Hinnom, a valley outside Jerusalem where refuse was burned and dead bodies of criminals were sometimes thrown. Fire continually burned there and Gehenna becomes symbolic of the final "Lake of Fire." This is what Jesus referred to in **Matthew 10:28, 25:41**, etc. And in **Revelation 20:9-15**, it is also called the second death from which all saved ones escape (**Rev. 2:11, 20:6**), beyond which there is no hope of a resurrection (**II Thess. 1:8-10**).

A short time before **Revelation 20:9** takes place, all the unsaved will be resurrected with physical and soul bodies to play a negative part in the concluding drama of that day. When the judgment of God falls and the earth receives its baptism of fire, all physical bodies of the unsaved are instantly destroyed. (The saved then living on earth will be translated at that moment to receive glorified bodies which cannot be hurt by the fire.) Then immediately the "Lake of Fire" is activated for receiving the unseen realm of Satan, Hades, in which all who have had physical bodies destroyed will find themselves. They will then experience a second death for their soul bodies, fulfilling Jesus' words that both body and soul would be utterly destroyed in Gehenna. Although physical bodies are destroyed instantly, the soul bodies disintegrate over a long period of time, symbolically pictured in the Bible by the disease of leprosy. Eventually, naked spirits, which have lost soul and body, have no bodies or vehicles in which to function, and find no rest or purpose. Scripture does not tell what they then do, but their conscious

to that which is not available to many. Overcomers draw on His grace to rise above their carnal tendencies. They avoid the variety of compromises so prevalent and impelling in Christian living. By the Spirit of revelation He gives the precious truths of the manna of the living Word on a new level to those who are hungry for all Truth. To those determined to know *the* Truth, He initiates a courtship to win His Bride to stand beside Him.

In its greater application, the white stone is a token of a course finished and a race won. In ancient times, it was the prize (different from a gift) for the victorious. The new name (character and influence) written on the stone has a meaning of "one in whom the Lord delights" and is symbolic of the new realm of glory which will be inherited by those who attain to the prize of the high calling (*Phil. 3:14*). The stone's whiteness indicates the purity of life which marks those who will enter the realm where they will see God and be in constant fellowship with Him (*Matt. 5:3*). Elsewhere, this purity is symbolized as being clothed in white (*Rev. 3:4-5, 7:9, 19:14*).

The Pergamos type overcomer strives to control every thought and word. He thinks and plans how he can help others; he plans what he will say so that it might carry fruit to others.

Thyatira

: 18 During the period of the Fourth Church, Thyatira, (meaning "continual" or "many sacrifices" – in this case, to the mother of harlots), the apostasy culminates with complete centralization of power. Jesus Christ sees and searches out all things with His penetrating insight like a flame of fire. Like burnished and white-hot bronze His is a refined and Godly wisdom, perfect in righteousness and judgment. This attribute is associated especially with His feet; His feet also picture the last generation of this age in the Body of Christians. What the "eyes" see, the "feet" will judge (*I Cor. 6:2-3*).

: 19-20 In this church system, there is spiritual reality and there are many in it who know the Lord, but man's church system always develops to a firm, self-reliant status thoroughly run by man for gain of power over individuals and for wealth. Therefore, the Lord has expressed His displeasure over the increased apostasy. During this era, the apostasy culminated into a complete centralization of power in the Bishop of Rome who was given the title of "Pope," a papa of Bishops. The eastern section of the organized Church resisted this centralization of power in the west, and gradually a schism developed to such proportions that an open split resulted.

After commending the faithful of the Church of Thyatira for their works and love and service and faith and patient endurance, the Lord spoke of things against them which led into apostasy. That which was the doctrine of Balaam during the Pergamos period, became the seducing tactics of the woman Jezebel in the Thyatira era of the Church. Jezebel was the wife of the wicked King Ahab during the days when Israel had almost completely abandoned the faith of its fathers. She was the daughter of a foreign king who brought her alien religion into Israel to displace God.; Because of the weakness of Ahab, she dominated the religious life of the nation, destroying the true Prophets of God and establishing the prophets of Baal and Asherah (*I Ki. 16:30-33; 18:13,19*). This is the typical picture Jesus chose to illustrate the religious condition of the Thyatira period, historically the middle ages, beginning in the years of growing papal power. Here in this middle Letter of the seven, Jesus shows a turning point, a

great deciding place, pronouncing *Great Tribulation (:22)* on the Church, unless it repents (thinks again and turns), because the people are listening to the harlot woman Jezebel. Jezebel is the same scarlet and purple clothed harlot called Babylon in *Revelation 17:1-6*, with whom the earth's rulers commit fornication and whose *wine* of fornication (teaching) inebriates the inhabitants of the earth into confusion.

Primarily, the fornication has to do with the illicit relationship of the Church and State, but it also relates to the unholy union of Church and man-made organizations which purport to speak for God (*Jms. 4:4*); it is the Church turning to the arm of flesh for its sustenance and propagating power (*Jer. 17:5*). This "mother of harlots" is symbolic of false religion – that which is alien to the true Spirit of Christ. Do you perceive that the mother of harlots is the warped faith from which that of the Protestant Churches was born? Do you not see the Lord's label is also on the teaching of the Protestant Churches? For anyone still attached to mother or daughter, what is now his responsibility before God? So be careful what you hear (*Mk. 4:24*), for there are many voices and they would deceive the elect, if it were possible (*I Jn. 4:1*). Try the spirits to know which is the Spirit of God; He never denies the Blood or *any* of the Word. Jezebel teaches through what the ear will hear and seduces through what the heart will feel. She does not set idols before you; you would not fall for that; she offers what appeals to your heart and to your appetites, that which is contrary to the Word of God (*II Tim. 4:3*). The wisdom of the world is held up as bait. She has filled the earth with her abominations, and the inhabitants of the earth are drunk with the wine of her fornication. It was the same pattern with Eve – it will make you wise, it is pleasant to look upon and good to eat – thus she has trampled the Word of God under foot (*Ezek. 23:30,37*). Likewise our children are fed polluted bread, and are trained to obtain worldly success. Christ calls for a complete separation from the forces of the world system, to be not of it, though we are in it.

:21 Spiritual fornication is the inordinate love of the pleasures of life and desires of the flesh. Jezebel says drink deeply of all that life can give, but God's Word says live soberly, righteously and godly, here and now, and rejoice (*Ti. 2:11-13*).

The contaminated religion tries to divert the follower of Christ; but the overcomer insists on Jesus Christ being first and preeminent, remaining faithful to the Husband Jesus.

:22-23 Except there be repentance, Jezebel and all those with her are to be cast into Great Tribulation (*Rev. 18:4-8*). Thus it is revealed that this Church period extends to the end of the age. During the past 1500 years, she has had much opportunity, but she does not repent. Therefore, it is during the Great Tribulation that the great harlot will be decimated by the beast powers, just as the dogs ate Jezebel's body after she was cast down and trodden under foot (*II Ki. 9:30-37*). The time is drawing near when all these things which have been prophesied shall take place, so consider what is being said (*Acts 3:21*); even now you are being tried and even now the Lord searches your heart. The rewards, different from the gifts, are to be given according to what we will have done in union with Jesus Christ (*Rom. 2:6, Rev. 22:12*).

:24 As many as have not this false doctrine of Jezebel and have not explored and learned the depths of Satan (meaning mystery or deep teaching) will not have to bear any other burden but to hold fast to the Truth they already have.

:26-28 It is in the Letter to Thyatira that there is first mention of the Great Tribulation which comes at the close of the Church Age. Mention of it is made in this Letter to the fourth Church, because the apostate religious system, which has become entrenched during the Thyatira period, continues into the Tribulation and will be judged at that time. The initial fulfillment of the fourth promise to overcomers comes at the beginning of the Tribulation period when a 144,000 group of God's choicest saints is translated bodily and taken to Himself (*Rev. 14:3-4, 12:5*). They will be given power over the nations during the Tribulation, functioning in glorified bodies with ability to appear and disappear while on the earth. These will shepherd or rule in kindness with the use of the shepherd's rod on the willing sheep in gentle discipline. But for the unruly, the guidance will constitute the "rod of iron" which will be used as the means to speak the Word of Christ and enforce His judgments (*Ps. 149:5-9*). As Jesus received authority from the Father, so will He give them authority to implement His will among the nations. Those nations which will not heed their admonitions will be broken in pieces as an earthen vessel (*Isa. 30:12-14*).

In addition to power and rule over nations, overcomers are promised the Morning Star. In its limited application, this promise is directed to the 60-fold category, those not yet having reached the 60-fold estate (the 60-fold). But the promise has its full application into and through the 100-fold estate. In the limited application, it shows the assignment of the 60-fold to earth during the ages to come, for ruling and shepherding. In this application, the Morning Star is the immortal seed of Jesus Christ, given and placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit. In the farther reaching overcoming of all things in the "world," an unrestricted power is given, beginning in Holy Spirit Baptism and then continuing in development. This Baptism then becomes an unshakable betrothal.

The Firstfruits 144,000 group of overcomers is also promised the "Morning Star" which is the pledge of Christ's betrothal to them as the Bridegroom. It is the Star and the Sceptre (rod) (*Num. 24:17-19, Isa. 11:4*) that breaks the enemies of the Body of Christians which is spiritual Israel (*Gal. 3:7*). The Morning Star (*II Pet. 1:19, Rev. 22:16*) is the Sun (the Son) which lights up the world with God's full power (*Mal. 4:1-3*). The Firstfruits 144,000 group carrying Christ's very life is manifested first, then later the other virgins who follow. Then a very short time afterward, Jesus Christ with all His saints returns visibly in full glory which every eye in the general area of Palestine shall see. Many see the risen sun in all its glory, but few arise early enough to experience its dawning which leads its appearing.

The Sardis category overcomer industriously and diligently works to build and establish a home in which he can be master or partner in bringing about conditions that are for the good of all in it. During six days, he works for God and self toward this end; on the seventh, he works for God.

It should be noted here that the admonition, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" precedes the promises to the overcomer in Letters 1-3. There, it is being said, pay very close attention because these three areas of overcoming are basic and foundational. Beginning in the Letter to the Fourth Church, the admonition follows the promises. By the change in position, we are told these promises are not applicable until the first three areas of overcoming are experienced in some measure.

REVELATION 3

Sardis

The Fifth Church, Sardis means “those escaped,” or “the remains,” or “remnant.” After many centuries of entrenched apostasy, great reformers were raised up who protested the abuses and falsehoods of the Roman system and brought the dawn of the Sardis era. The fifth Church fulfilled the number of freedom and liberation, but also that of human weakness. The Scriptures began to be opened to them and they began to speak the truth with power. The development of printing and printing press enabled portions of the Scriptures to be distributed to multitudes and, in time, a mighty movement swept across the formerly Catholic dominated countries of Europe. Protestantism was born in an emergence from spiritual slumber and darkness and, for the first time in hundreds of years, there was a large-scale spiritual awakening.

:1 The seven Stars indicate the shining out of a true spiritual ministry, and the seven spirits show the working of the Spirit of revelation and power. In this way it was fulfilled that the Church of the Reformation had a name (nature, character) that lived, but immediately Jesus said, “You are dead.” Why? Although the reformers broke away from the dead forms of the Roman Church, they very soon began to establish church systems patterned after their Catholic mother. They avoided the complete centralization of power, but in the same pattern they began erecting hierarchies of authority in man-made denominational councils and various clerical bodies. There was also the further turning to the “arm of flesh” by entering into Church-State relationships in various countries. What had sprung up as a living movement gradually crystallized into well-established, organized denominations with rigid lines of demarcation, fixed creeds and forms. The creedal battles during many years were a further deadening influence.

:2 Therefore the Lord warns, “Keep awake and strengthen and invigorate what remains and is on the point of dying,” for He has not found thy works perfect before God.

:3 “Remember what you received, and conform to that and repent, or I will come as a thief.” This means He will pass you by without your knowing it – until too late. A thief comes not to take cheap things, but to take the best and most precious (*Mal. 3:16-17*). The Protestant denominations, along with their Catholic mother, will not be expecting the Lord’s return or know the pattern for His return. They will be taken completely by surprise. But He surprises only those who have not allowed Him to prepare them (*1 Thess. 5:2-6*).

:4-5 The few whose “names” *can* be confessed before the Father will not have defiled their garments but will have kept their inner soul garments clean. Initially washed in the Blood of the Lamb (*Rev. 1:5, 7:14*), they have been continuously kept laundered white and pure, through conformance to the truth (*Jn. 15:14-15, 1 Pet. 1:22*), through

the use of the water of the Word (*Eph. 5:26-27, Jn. 15:3, Eccles. 9:8*). These “names” shall walk with Jesus in white, through being received by Him when He comes as a thief at the beginning of the Tribulation period, and through being clothed with their glorified bodies at that time. The overcomers in white raiment symbolize the glorified bodies with which the translated saints will be clothed. In its own realm, such a body glows with the soft white light of the glory of God. When manifested on earth and appearing to those yet in physical bodies, the glorified body vibrates to the pitch of flesh and bone (*Lk. 24:39*) and is as tangible as any flesh and blood body. But its sustaining principle is no longer the life in the blood, which links the body with the earth and its elements. The very life substance of God sustains it and relates it to the plane of Divine life and light. Five is the number of God’s grace. Overcoming is in proper correlation between thought and desire. It is achieved through the grace of God when we continually demand a full liberation from self-interests, because of love for Him. Overcoming is progressive.

As already noted for those of the fourth Church, the limited application of the promises to the overcomers in the fourth through the sixth Church eras are for the 60-fold category. The white clothing brings a permanence of registry in the Book of Life, and eventual recommendations to the High Father and His organization. It is the full liberation from self-interests, through the integration of God’s grace. In its limited application, it becomes the earth scene reflection of the heavenly scene. In the extended application, these promises are to the Firstfruits group and Harvest group, both of the 100-fold.

It is because the overcomer is so clothed that Jesus Christ is able to confess his name (nature, character) before the Father and before His angels. None except those so confessed will participate, and none except those so clothed will ever be ushered into the presence of the Most High God. To them is given the added assurance that under no circumstances (in original texts) will their name ever be removed from the Book of Life. They will be sons of glory, manifesting the life and light of God on their own plane, and also ministering to and watching over those who are yet on the earth plane. At the close of the Tribulation, the Firstfruits overcomers will be joined by a great host, as many more overcomers put on their garments of light and glory to be united with Jesus Christ in joint heirship and joint rulership of all that is His (*Rev. 7:9-17*). This fifth Church period, too, extends to the end of the age. Note again that these promises are not set up for men who expose themselves to the Lord’s teaching, and more teaching and reminding – and stop there. They are made to those who will strive their utmost to discipline themselves. in that teaching into overcoming and more overcoming.

Philadelphia

:7 Philadelphia, meaning “brotherly love,” represents the era of the great evangelical and missionary witness which carried the Gospel to many lands, begun when the Protestant churches had become almost dead and ineffectual in testimony. Particularly in English speaking countries, individuals and small groups turned again to Jesus Christ, seeking revival, because of the desperately wicked conditions which prevailed. In answer to their cry, Jesus said of Himself that “He opens and no man shuts. . . .” Here emphasis is placed on holiness of life and on presenting the Gospel of the Truth to the ends of the earth. And flaming evangelists did rise, calling sinners to repentance. And missionary societies began to mushroom and thousands of missionaries went to heathen

lands. Many movements arose placing emphasis on the simple life of the New Testament in faith and order, and other movements arose placing emphasis on holiness, sanctification and separation from the world. Simultaneously with this spiritual resurgence, primarily in the English speaking world, Britain and the USA rose to positions of world leadership, setting an open door before the Church of the 19th century to present the Gospel witness throughout the world. These two greatest Christian nations had both the opportunity and the means presented to them, for, as sovereign King having the Key of the House of David – His beloved (*Isa. 22:20-25*), Jesus pledged that no man would shut that door.

During the era of the sixth Church, He gave the Christian peoples an unprecedented opportunity, an open door, to come into the fullness of that number (the number of man). It was on the sixth day God created man and said, “let him have dominion” (*Gen. 1:26*). If God’s people had been willing to pay the price, spiritual dominion could have come throughout the earth and the way prepared for a 20th century of righteousness and peace. But instead, the 20th century has seen two world wars and many smaller ones, with a third world war now on the horizon. It saw the beast of communism arise to exterminate or enslave multitudes of people, and it has seen the rapid decline of Britain in world leadership. It is now seeing the power of entrenched evil fasten itself upon nations as never before, with the breakdown of law and order a growing menace. It is seeing a rapid loss of individual liberties and increasing control by expanding socialistic governments. It is seeing unprecedented moral breakdown on all levels of society, and increasing deterioration of the organized churches into the practical infidelity of liberalism and modernism. Those who truly love the Lord will have to give up most of their earthly wealth and possessions, in order to remain true to the Lord and keep from receiving the mark of the beast on or in their foreheads or on their hands (*Rev. 13:16-17*). All this is because God’s people failed to use the open door set before them and failed to vigorously carry out the commission to evangelize the nations.

:8 However, because of the faithfulness of a small remnant which has kept His Word and not denied His Name, He will continue to keep this door open, even to the end of the age. The Gospel of the Kingdom will yet be preached in all nations for a witness before the end comes (*Matt. 24:14*). Because of the failure to fully disseminate the Word during the years when it would have been relatively easy, the battle will now be hard fought with much opposition. Now the cost will be great to carry the message to the ends of the earth. Martyrs will be many as Satanic power in full fury rises to encompass the earth. The Church has “but little power,” but God’s Word will be fulfilled through His secret strategy. Unprecedented spiritual power will become available when He suddenly translates the 144,000 Firstfruits group. He will commission it to uphold and guide the end-time Body of Christians on earth, and then pour out His Spirit in profusion in fulfillment of the end-time Pentecost (*Joel 2:28-32*). Through the supernatural guidance of His glorified ones and through the anointed ministry of His chosen saints on earth, the Word of God will go forth in power, accompanied by signs and wonders and miracles.

So shall the true spirit of the Philadelphia Church continue until the end – as do the periods of the Thyatira and Sardis Churches – in order that a mighty Harvest may be gathered and brought in to meet Jesus Christ in the clouds. The apostate Roman Church of the Thyatira period continues to the end of the age, to be cast into a bed of Tribulation (*Rev. 2:22-23*). The dying Protestant Churches which had their inception in the Sardis

era continue, but are to be taken by surprise when Jesus comes as a thief in the night (*Rev. 3:3*). However, the faithful remnant represented by the Philadelphia Church shall continue as a witness of the Lord's faithfulness, until, through that Church, He has accomplished the fulfillment of the open door which no man can shut. The door shall then remain open, and even nations which seem to be shut to a vital Gospel witness shall yet be penetrated with mighty revival.

:9 After the Great Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the *prepared* and waiting remnant, a *mighty* revival begins to sweep across the earth, and the words of this verse are fulfilled. One of the great phenomena of the end-time revival will be the turning of many Jews to Jesus Christ as their Messiah. The turning will be brought about by the unusual witness of those who have been specially prepared and commissioned for a Spirit-powered ministry that will convict and convince. Many Jews who have been the Satan-impelled enemies of the Cross and the Christian Gospel will suddenly make an about-face and become outspoken witnesses for the Truth. They will come in humility and repentance and in great contrition, and will sit at the feet of those who are gathered together in the spirit of the Philadelphia church, where the love of God is manifested in reality and power. Then they will become "true Jews" indeed in the Spirit of the New Covenant of faith through circumcision of the heart (*Rom. 2:28-29, 4:11*), and they shall worship God in oneness of heart with those they had formerly despised.

:10 This promise of keeping out from the hour for testing the faithfulness of the remnant appears in only two places, *Luke 21:36* and here. Primarily, it is to the 144,000 wise-virgins Firstfruits group which is to be taken and translated into the heavenly realm just before the 3 1/2 years of the Great Tribulation begin. They are to be redeemed from the earth to stand before the Son of Man so that they might be commissioned for duty among the saints remaining on earth during the Tribulation (*Lk. 21:36, Rev. 14:1-4*). However, all Christians remaining on earth will be tested on how faithfully they will *keep* His Word and put their *complete* trust in Jesus Christ. If they are found faithful, they shall receive His protection and guidance. They will not be confused, confounded, or harmed by the trying events and circumstances of the Tribulation period. The critical test will be the "mark of the beast"; *testing* by it will be only on so-called Christian nations.

But they will have to answer at least some certain questions:

"Is present life so dear you would not die for Him? Would you be willing to starve to death for Him, or freeze to death, or be beaten and tortured into death for Him? Could you endure seeing one or more of your children tortured to death for Him? Would you languish in prison for Him? Would you deny Him to retain your eyesight and freedom in Lucifer's realm?" The variety of tests and trials will be great. But today, we have opportunity to cultivate a love for Him against which no other love, attachment, or other emotion can compete. With that love established, little further testing is required. His Kingdom is one in which all are completely loyal. However, among the fully protected ones, there will be those who will die for His name's sake to qualify themselves for the martyr's greater reward. But their death will occur only because they have willingly agreed to make such a sacrifice. Until their time comes, they will be kept safe from all harm.

The Lord said the testing of those not taken away will be for "the hour," not one precise hour. Unless we use the Lord's numerical language, as explained elsewhere in

His Word, we will miss the information He intended to pass along. He said His work in His Father's business was His "12 hour day" (*Jn. 9:4-5, 11:9*). That was from age 12 to 33, or 21 years. Precisely one hour of that "day" is then 21 calendar months of 640 solar days. But He spoke of *the* hour, not one hour, so the extent of this "hours" might be anywhere from 630 to 650 days. In *Revelation 9*, we shall see it most reasonable to select about 635 days for the length of "the hour." From *Revelation 12:6*, we learn the woman who brings forth the Manchild is to experience 1260 days of wilderness testing, elsewhere described as The Great Tribulation. She also has brought forth Protestant daughters during the late 1500's. She will be tested for her faithfulness during 1260 days, at least in some lands. Her daughters in Protestant lands will also be tested, but especially during the last 635 days or so of the 1260. All the testing is on Christians to prove faithfulness to Christ (there is no call whatsoever to test rejectors of Christ and God), and its climax is to be by means of the mark of the beast. More detail on that will be given in the teaching on *Revelation 13*. This testing terminates on the Day of Trumpets, in September of whatever year. It will be upon all Christians, while World War III is raging.

: 11 The "crown" signifies ruling authority. While all overcoming 60-fold Christians are to be promoted into ruling responsibilities in Christ's earthly Kingdom, the main thrust here is toward the Firstfruits, who will be kept *out* from the hour of testing. These wise virgins, potentially Firstfruits, who have been Holy Spirit Baptized and who do then overcome prior to The Great Tribulation, will retain their "High Priest" crown which accompanies the 100-fold estate (*Lev. 21:12*). The crown here too, in its higher application, is the prize of the high calling, the heavenly calling for all received into the heavenly Kingdom to rule and reign with Christ.

Give diligence, therefore, to make your calling and election sure (*II Pet. 1:10-11*), for the evil powers can deprive you of your crown. A crown is symbolic of ruling authority. Those joining the Lord in this age are *only* those who are prepared to reign and rule with Him. Therefore, the one who misses being taken up in this age, through lack of preparation, will lose the crown and will later fill a different position under those who do rule. The gathering up phrase "coming soon or quickly" is used only three times, here and in the prologue and in the epilogue, and it denotes rapidity of fulfillment, once the events start – as with the birth of a child (*I Thess. 5:2-3*).

: 12 The overcomer will be made a pillar in the Body of Christ which is the Temple of God. The Temple pillar is shaped by a skilled craftsman. It is brought into the Temple to be its vital support. It is then in the Presence of the Lord and remains there always. The Temple being built is a spiritual one made of living stones (*I Pet. 2:5, Eph. 2:20-22*). The stones are now being hewn and prepared in the quarry, as each overcomer yields to the working of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone of this Temple to be filled with the fullness of the glory of God – a Temple fitly joined together, first on earth and then in the heavenlies. The overcomer of the Philadelphia type is he who strives to gain mastery over all anxiety about earthly matters in his today or tomorrow. He is much concerned about and gives much thought to the needs of his fellow man, especially the more disadvantaged.

The type of what the Lord is now doing is shown in the Old Testament events which led up to the construction of the material Temple of Solomon.

David's reign is a type of the Christian Dispensation. It followed the reign of Saul,

a type of the Old Testament era of the Law. David prepared in *abundance* for the Temple before his death (**I Chron. 22:1-5**), but the Temple was not actually joined together until Solomon began his reign, which represents the Kingdom era now at hand. So perfect was the preparation of the stones at the quarries *before* they were brought together at the building site that each stone fit in its proper place without requiring hammer, axe, or any tool of iron. They very quietly and perfectly were fitted together while the Temple was being built (**I Ki. 6:7**). The building together of the glorious Temple took place in Solomon's reign, but its stones were cut out and prepared at the quarry *before* being joined together in the Temple structure.

Therefore, the Lord must do a perfecting work in your lives now (at the quarry), for as living stones, you must be prepared to take your place in that which He has chosen for you. Before long He will begin to move in great power to join together the living stones as a mighty witness to His power and glory. Even as Solomon was anointed King before David's death, the Day of the Lord (Solomon's reign) has its inception before the Christian Dispensation (David's reign) is completely over. The overlapping period is signaled and its imminence is announced by the initial blowing of the seven Trumpets (**Rev. 8:2**). Historically, this period had its inception during the years when the secret of atomic energy release was being unlocked. More specifically, it began when the first atomic bomb was exploded. However, the actual joining together of Christ's Glorious Temple in power does not take place until the blowing of the seventh Trumpet, when His secret strategy is implemented and the Holy Spirit is then poured out at the second Pentecost.

The Temple will be joined together on earth and afterward in the heavenlies, as a witness to His Glory, and to bring forth a mighty Harvest as the one age is closing and another is beginning. Immediately following The Great Tribulation, a great host of overcomers will be joined to Christ in the heavenly Kingdom (**Matt. 13:39; Rev. 7:9,14, 14:14-16**), being united with one another and with the Firstfruits who preceded them (**Rev. 14:2-4**). This glorified body of saints will then be the means by which Jesus Christ will dwell in the midst of the people who remain on earth within the boundaries of His earthly Kingdom. Those in the earthly Kingdom will receive constant teaching, guidance and counsel from the glorified saints.

During their progressive learning on earth and also in the heavenlies, those who are overcomers must receive spiritual impartation to enable progress toward obtaining their inheritance as joint heirs in the heavenly Kingdom. Therefore, provision is made to equip them with new "names" (nature, character, influence) at each major step, by a writing or sealing (impressing) in the mind. In **Revelation 7:3**, the bondslaves (not the Bride) are sealed (an impression formed) in their foreheads with the Seal of the Living God (Christ). In **Revelation 14:1**, the Firstfruits have His "name" and His Father's "name" written in their forehead. In **Revelation 3:12**, Jesus says He will write upon him the "name" of My God. The Greek word for seal means "an impress." In ancient and even in more recent times, a seal was used to make a "writing" on a soft substance such as moist clay or warm wax, much in the same way as we would write a signature. Thus "sealing" and writing would be synonymous and interchangeable.

The writing of these "names" has nothing to do with an outward inscription of any kind; the "name" expresses Spirit impartations, making the recipients equal to the requirements for participation in and fulfilling their assigned positions. The "name of My

God” must be so written in the foreheads of *all* overcomers when they take on their glorified bodies, “sealing” them for the Spirit-powered ministry that is to come forth in the Spiritual Temple or Body in this end-time (*Ezek. 9:4-11; Rev. 7:2-3, 14:1*). The personal Temple is first to be built on earth by those in the 60-fold or better categories. Those qualifying for the sixth Church promise are expected to take dominion over the beasts of their “earth” (carnal tendencies). The new name (personal attributes) is to be in the pattern of Christ’s. He called Himself Son of Man, which has to refer to a fully matured man on earth (not just physically). He measured up to the highest expectations. He demonstrated full dominion, overcoming all harmful human instincts and propensities, reflecting the true image of God. (If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.) The new name promise is therefore to extend far beyond man’s present concept of glory!

At the start or end of The Great Tribulation, all who are to be received by Christ to enter His heavenly Kingdom and the New Jerusalem must be so sealed. After the overcomers have been glorified, they also receive the “name” (power potential) necessary for dwelling in the New Jerusalem, which will have come down out of the upper heavens and be stationed in the stratosphere above the earth. This “City of My God” then becomes the home and headquarters for the glorified saints who will descend and ascend to and from earth in carrying out their duties. And finally, the glorified overcomers are also to receive the power-potential of “My own *new* name” to fully equip them for ruling and reigning with Christ. Those who have met the minimum requirements of overcomers and are glorified become candidates for “sealing,” first, with the Father’s “name,” bringing protection and enablement, second, with the “name” of the New Jerusalem, and, third, with the new “name” of Jesus Christ, in order to be equipped to reign and rule with Him.

But all who are to be effective helpers of God in these end-times must also be sealed on earth by Jesus Christ on the forehead, in the mind (*Rev. 14:1, I Cor. 2:16*). The helpers here are first and primarily spiritual Israelites (*Gal. 3:7, 29*) out of the end-time Christian nations (*Acts 15:14*). Somewhat later this same sealing procedure also applies to a firstfruits Jewish bondsman group in physical Israel (*Rev. 7:2-4, Heb. 8:8-10*). These respective groups are to be sealed before and are to precede their brethren during the events leading into and through The Great Tribulation. The small group of spiritual Israel from the Philadelphia Church era (*Rev. 3:10*) is to be kept out of the great hour of trial, and this timing is consistent with sealing before the angels loose the four winds of judgment mentioned in *Revelation 7:1-3*. But note, all overcomers must be so sealed (*Rev. 3:12*), whether before or during the Tribulation, prior to being commissioned. The writing of the name of the Lamb in *Revelation 14:1* is like the impressing of the Seal of the Living God (Jesus Christ) in *Revelation 7:2-3*.

As previously mentioned (*Rev. 2:17*), the term “name” is used here to indicate the nature or the character and influence. Neither “God” nor “Father” are names as we normally define the term, but rather titles. The personal name of the Father of Yahweh-Jesus has never been revealed. The much used name of Deity revealed in Scripture is that of Yahweh (Old Testament) or Jesus Who is the Son of the Father (New Testament); it is also a title. Jesus calls His Father “My God” (*Rev. 3:12, Matt. 27:46, Jn. 20:17*). The titles “God” and “Father” indicate a relationship and a function. They indicate one who is keeper over another. Yahweh-Jesus is our Keeper or God; and since we were brought into being by the Son (*Jn. 1:3,10; Col. 1:16*), He is our Father

also. The title "God" and the title "Father" can be applied either to the Son or to His Father (*Jn. 1:18, 20:28; Heb. 1:8-9, 12:9*), depending on who is then the acting Keeper, for there can be only one (acting) God in relationship to humans (*Matt. 6:24*).

On earth, before heaven, there are four major steps which must be taken by each and every Christian, and every major step in a Christian's life requires his individual cooperation with the Lord. To cooperate, one has to know what is available at each step, because the Lord does not allow for skipped steps (*Rom. 2:11*). He must then have a desire to cooperate, rather than to ignore or refuse, and he first must be qualified to cooperate. He must know how to cooperate, recognizing the Lord's design. He must act, believing the Lord is able to impart, once there has been qualification. Finally, he must realize how to use what is received, if there is to be any profit to him and if he is to progress toward and into the next step.

FIRST STEP. *Change of allegiance*, from the world order and its dominion, toward God. The change is possible through a purchase transaction made by Christ. It is by His redemption (buying back), and the price was His life blood. The step is taken through recognition and application of the fact that the purchase has been made for all men (*II Cor. 5:19*), and the step is effected through "head"-knowledge and agreement to a personal association with the purchase. This step brings with it the *promise* of eternal life for all who continue to come *toward* God (*Jn. 6:37*), even though not having reached Him to be in Him, and He in them. This is entering the 30-fold category.

SECOND STEP. *Entrance* into Christ's Kingdom on earth – as a citizen. The Kingdom was established firmly when Jesus Christ entered His glorified life, and it remains open for all who have enough interest to respond in the manner He requires. "He whose ears are continually open to My words (all) and believes Him Who sent Me (to save) has eternal life" – life which will withstand the stress of ages (*Jn. 5:24*). It is a step of heart union with the Lord. It is effected through a desire to have Him regulate our living process, and the desire is built during active and careful study of His Word. He is no outsider's servant. The second step necessarily involves a progressive willingness for personal dedication to His will or plan in thought and purpose and action (learning to allow His plan to function). Not all who verbalize an invitation really mean to change their lives from the moment of invitation; only the Holy Spirit knows when the person has truly satisfied the requirements for making the second step. This step is the entering of the 60-fold category.

The taking of the second step brings *possession* of eternal life. At the moment of fulfilling the requirements, the Holy Spirit plants the immortal seed of Jesus Christ (*Jn. 5:24, I Pet. 1:23*) and the soul is permanently preserved by the implanting of the Word, Jesus Christ (*Jms. 1:21; Rom. 6:23, 11:29*). That perfected seed from the glorified body of Jesus Christ becomes a drawing power within its new host toward the righteousness of Christ. The second step is preparatory to Water Baptism and later receiving Christ's Holy Spirit Baptism (two events). Knowledge of this step was lost in the darkness which followed the establishment of the Church in the first centuries, and was only re-discovered in the 1500's at a time when the thoughts of having to be "regenerated" were officially considered to be heresy and led very close to burning at the stake.

THIRD STEP. Heavenly citizenship privileges and responsibilities. It is only in the third step that the Christian can begin to take up those things which are uniquely available to the citizens of Christ's heavenly Kingdom. Prior to this step, there may be the

learning about and preparation for the life of a full citizen, but no person is ready for this step, until Jesus has *begun* to be Lord in his life and until there is an eagerness to dedicate his whole being to God's life-plan. It is Christ Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, when His minimum of dedication to God's life-plan is proven by the Christian's life style. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit "burns out" or consumes rebellious human nature with Spirit "Fire," purifying the soul as Christ's soul is pure. Only the pure in heart shall see God (*Matt. 3:10-11, 5:8*). The third step is the entering into the 100-fold category.

It is also called the Seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit (*Eph. 1:13-14*), and it brings a preliminary taste of having the operation and experience of Kingdom citizenship rights, to the extent the "sealing" is maintained. Through its purifying comes a continuing eagerness toward conforming to the Lord's will in all things, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-23*), the gifts of the Spirit (*I Cor. 12:7-11*), and Christ's imparted righteousness (beyond His imputed righteousness), holiness and purity (*I Jn. 3:3,7; I Pet. 1:15*). A good definition of Christ's imparted righteousness- is conformation to God's will in every thought, purpose and action, rejecting all thought, purpose and action not conformed to His will. Holy Spirit Baptism is the *instantaneous* spiritual circumcision cutting off the "flesh" (unchanged human nature so as to make room for Christ's nature) (*Col. 2:11-12; Rom. 4:11-12; I Jn. 2:1,6; Eph. 4:21-24*). This step brings the practical possibility of habitually living within the guidance of the Holy Spirit (*Gal. 5:16; Rom. 6:3-6,11*). It is a step designed to be taken near the beginning of the Christian life (*Matt. 6:33*); its employment is prerequisite to qualifying for the next step in being saved (*I Pet. 4:18-19*). The application and development of ability to live out the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in the heavenly Kingdom, lead to having the mind of Christ in all things, and are preparation for the sealing with His "name" or nature (*Rev. 14:1*). It is the practice in purity which brings the Christian fully to the overcomer status, and only overcomers may be sealed with these "names."

Knowledge of this third step was also lost during the dark centuries of Church history and, with very few exceptions, was re-discovered only in the early 1900's. Even now, most Christians either have no concept or only vague impressions of what the third step is, what it is for, and how it fits into God's plan for man. Often it is viewed as a nice frill or extra. Sometimes it is identified with "speaking in tongues." Sometimes it is viewed as a graduation ceremony after having "really" become a Christian. Nothing could be more detrimental to a Christian's progress than these concepts – except a view which rejects this step as unnecessary.

FOURTH STEP. Ministry fulfillment while yet on earth to parallel Christ's own ministry on earth. This step brings the granting of authority with power, absolute protection, the Lord's provision for every need, spiritual or physical, and the ability to walk and talk with God as Adam did in the beginning. This step brings the imprinting of the Name of our Father, Jesus Christ, which He too had when He fully overcame Satan in the wilderness (*Lk. 4:17-19*). It is the seal of Christ's acceptance, after having made the pattern of complete overcoming a firm and consistent pattern. It is a sealing that is now taking place among men in this day, on those who have seen the Lord's requirements for going further, who have believed in His Word and in His Life as a pattern for all men, who have prepared themselves in His pattern, and who have sought the Lord for all He offers. No person will ever enter His heavenly Kingdom, nor will any person ever reign and rule with Him, without first having received His acceptance – without first

having manifested the Christ “name” or nature to fulfill an assigned ministry.

Although this message is not the text of today’s sermons, the way toward the fourth step and its attainment should be the good news of this hour to every dedicated and Spirit-empowered Christian. Each should prepare for the tremendous new work of the Lord which will surpass anything and everything He has ever done with the human race. It would appear that our Lord cannot physically arrive as He has faithfully promised, until all things are fulfilled and until all opposition to His plans, including physical death, is under at least a few of the “feet” of His Body (*Matt. 22:44, Acts 3:21, Rom. 16:20, I Cor. 15:25-27, Heb. 2:7-8*). If all things at the consummation of the ages are now taking shape, what kind of person ought each of us to be in set-apart behavior and in godly qualities (*II Pet. 3:11-12*)? This now is the hour of preparation for those who are awake and watching.

Why is it necessary to be sealed first with the Christ’s Name? It opens up the sixth covenant to the Churches, offered to *overcomers* (*Rev. 3:12*). It prepares for and makes possible the seventh covenant of sitting with Jesus Christ on His Throne (*Rev. 3:21*), which consummates the overcoming cycle for those who are to rule and reign with Him. But there can be no reigning with Christ until the overcomer has been qualified for and accepted into the scalings of *Revelation 14:1* and *3:12*.

Jesus is our pattern, as it is written, and He was to be the *first* (born) of *many* brethren (*Rom. 8:29, Eph. 4:13*). Those who work consistently at overcoming all deviations to the Lord’s plan for education and training can soon reach a position in which they receive the Father’s complete provision, protection and enabling. This was the condition which made complete the joy the Son experienced in His Father (*Jn. 15:10-11*). He was fully accepted. For the same purpose and for the same reason, the Body of Christ overcomers must have Jesus Christ’s seal, if they are to fulfill a ministry in His pattern in the end-time. Both protection and enablement for the ministry will be necessary. This sealing is the end-time fulfillment of Jesus’ high-priestly prayer (*Jn. 17:11,23*), “Holy Father, *keep* them in your Name . . . that they may be one as We are . . . that they may be perfectly united; and that the world may know that You have sent Me.”

In one sense, all who have accepted Jesus are His. But there is a special sense in which those of the overcoming Body are His (to be perfectly united to manifest His glory and to be joined to Him in His own heavenly Kingdom). These are His inheritance (*Eph. 1:18*), His fullness (*Eph. 1:23*), His Bride and His household (*Eph. 5:25-32, 2:19*), to share in His calling (*Eph. 1:18, Heb. 3:1*) and to be with Him forever. The “name” of Jesus Christ was a copy of that of His Father (*Jn. 14:9*). Jesus glorified God on earth (*Jn. 17:4*). He could do so only through manifesting the essence of God’s being and nature, *that which God is* – His Name. Therefore they too who are disciplined by Him are to be especially kept by *their* Father’s Name in the end-time. Surely Jesus’ prayer will be specifically fulfilled in this end-time, when those who are His shall be specially kept (sealed) through that Name. They will manifest His power and glory as no people have ever done.

For further illustration of the name-impartation principle, see *Exodus 23:20-21*. There, the Lord’s Name in the angel indicates that the vibration or radiation of His own being, as well as His power-presence, was in the angel, making him equal to the occasion. We cannot separate the Lord’s Name from that which He is and that which He manifests. The same principle in type was shown when the Lord said He would choose a place in

which He would put His Name, or where He would cause His Name to dwell (*Deut. 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23-24; 16:2, 6, 11*), referring to the future Temple (*I Ki. 8:16-29, 9:3, 11:36*). He did not need literally to inscribe His Name on the Temple because He was talking about a living reality within it. His Name in the Temple was the Shekinah Glory which dwelt in the Holy of Holies and which was a vibrational representation of His own being and power. Under the New Covenant, our bodies are to become the living Temple (*I Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19*) for receiving His Name.

At the present time in these mortal bodies (the portable Tabernacle), through His indwelling presence (His seed), we have the vibrational essence of the Lord's redemptive Name, Jesus – from Joshua or Yoshua, meaning “Yahweh is Savior.” After we receive our glorified bodies (of which Solomon's glorious Temple was a type), a necessity for dwelling in the heavenly Kingdom and the New Jerusalem, we shall receive the power essence of His *new* Name (*Rev. 19:12, 22:4-5*), making us equal to the occasion of ruling and reigning with Him. But first, while still here in mortal bodies, we must have the Christ's Name written or sealed on our minds and hearts (*Heb. 8:10*).

Jesus is still making intercession (*Rom. 8:34*), as a continuation of the *John 17* prayer, that those who are His would be kept (sealed) and perfectly united into one spiritual body, with special enablement for a Spirit-powered end-time ministry to fulfill and consummate Christ's own ministry on earth. The many sons (*Rom. 8:29, Heb. 2:10-13, Isa. 8:18*) cannot be separated from *the* Son, and they must be sealed, even as Jesus was. Because the ministry of His Body cannot be fulfilled without the Living Word being bound up and sealed in the mind (*Isa. 8:16*), the seal of Yahweh-Jesus is to be placed on the forehead and the mind. The verses of *John 5:19, 30, 8:28* indicate by example that the mind is to be completely sealed, completely “possessed” by the Will and Word of the Father – with the essence of the Father's very being and nature. Here is the evidence of a mind so sealed with the Father's Name: through this sealing Jesus knew only His will, saw, heard and *then* spoke only His Word. This is also the pattern for the end-time Body of Christians, and Christ will attest to this by putting the seal of His Name upon those who have been tested and proven to follow fully in the footprints of Jesus, doing only the Father's will. The impressing would indicate a stamp of approval and a choice. In *Revelation 17:14*, those who are with the Lamb during the final battle of the ages are the “called and *chosen* (sealed) and faithful,” those totally committed to His will.

Those who are sealed with Christ's Name are those who are being prepared for manifest sonship. A father does imprint his name in his sons, and Jesus was the pattern Son, sealed into full sonship. Those who are sealed with Christ's Name written in their foreheads are those who have come into a minimum maturity of sons of God and are thus being made ready for manifestation. No son is ready to put on immortality, whether of earthly or heavenly glory, until sealed in the forehead with the Christ's Name.

The Old Testament High Priest is a type, not only of Christ but also of some in His Body (*I Cor. 12:12*). Only the High Priest could go beyond the veil and into the Holy of Holies on the great Day of Atonement – but before entering he had to be properly clothed. Special garments were made for glory and for beauty (*Ex. 28:2*). A part of these garments was the mitre or turban for the head, upon which was a plate of gold inscribed with engravings, like a seal or signet, “Holiness to Yahweh” (*Ex. 28:36*); this engraving was to be on the High Priest's forehead (*Ex. 28:38*). The garments of the

High Priest are a type of those with which Christians must be clothed and adorned *before* entering the Holy of Holies beyond the veil; and the engraving or seal upon the forehead, "Holiness to Yahwah," is included. We must become partakers of His holiness (**Heb. 12:14**). His righteousness must be fulfilled in us (**Rom. 8:4**) by being woven into the very fabric of mind and soul, as in a garment of finely twined linen (**Rev. 19:8**). Going beyond the veil, as His spiritual Body, means entering His fullness for a Spirit-powered ministry and also, in time, entering into the heavenly Kingdom which He has prepared for those who love Him (**Jn. 14:21**) and who are to reign and rule with Him.

To the overcomers described as the Church at Philadelphia, the Letter to the sixth Church promises permanent position in the Temple of the High Father. At the sixth level, there is no more going out, because of having learned better. They have the "name" of the High Father, and the "name" of His City (dwelling place), and Jesus' own new "name." The limited application refers to the earth-based Temple nation and its Kingdom organization, staffed with strong pillars to give it support and majesty. At the sixth level, there is full dominion, reflecting the Father's image as by a grown-up son. It is the finished product of earth's schooling, projecting the son into and beyond the 100-fold estate, fitting him for heavenly enrollment.

But where are those who understand what the Lord is doing? Where are those to whom the Lord has revealed Himself? Is there not an instrument in the land that the Lord can use to reveal Himself to the people? Is there not one sufficiently receptive to the things of the Spirit that He can make known His purposes for this day? The Lord is looking across the land to find vessels that He may use for His glory. Today, He is looking for a people to be His light and His glory, waiting patiently for those to whom He can declare His ways and through whom He can show Himself strong.

However, a vessel does not boast of itself when it is only a container for something else; neither does an instrument boast of itself when it is being wielded by someone else. A vessel emptied and prepared by the Lord for the glory He shall put in it, and an instrument used in His hand to accomplish His purpose have no basis for boasting. What the Lord has need of is vessels into which He can pour His glory so that the excellency of that power may be of Him and not of man. He also has need of instruments which He may use in His hand, but the vessel and the instrument are one. First, one should become a vessel into which the Lord can pour Himself, to be filled with His glory and His power; then one may become an instrument in His hand.

Of course, there are instruments He uses that have not first become vessels. The Lord has the use of any person, or nation, or force that He chooses as an instrument for His purpose. But this is not what He is seeking, for this kind of instrument is not to His glory. Such an instrument may magnify Him in the eyes of some as they behold what He is able to accomplish by His mighty hand through whomsoever He chooses, but this is not what He is seeking. The Lord is seeking those through whom He can demonstrate not only the power and glory of His person but also His compassion and love. Such a vessel and instrument was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was perfectly yielded to the Spirit of God to do all that He wished. Today, the Lord will demonstrate His glory in vessels He finds among those who have sought and continue to seek God – that they may be found worthy of all that has been prepared for them.

What should one do to become a vessel for the Lord? First, there should be a complete emptying of one's self. He will not allow a mixture in His work. It must be all of Him and none of self. He cannot use vessels in this day who are even a little bit filled with personal desires and other plans and selfish ways. When there is a complete emptying out of self, then only can the Lord fill with that which will bring honor to Himself, that which is not a mixture, but which is pure and true. The vessel must empty itself completely, and then patiently let the Lord fill it.

There must be an appropriation by faith of what is available in His plan (*the Faith*), because the Lord will pour nothing into the vessel that is not received by a specific act of faith and reaching out (*Jms. 1:6-8*). Search out, reach out, and receive what the Father has made available in His Word, for how can you appropriate a thing of which you know nothing? Seek Him in His Word, believe all *He* has spoken, and He shall begin to fill your vessel. Then He would have you *use* and pour out what He has placed within you. Just as water becomes stagnant when it remains unmoved, so shall you stagnate, if you do not let what is within pour out to others. As you pour out, the Lord will pour in, and you will become full and running over.

The vessel should be continually available for the Lord's cleansings, for removal of any deposits or accumulation of debris which might be within. The enemy is always ready to slip things in on the sly so as to contaminate anything the Lord is placing within. Therefore, constantly search your own heart (although not focusing on introspection, which can be devastating), in order that any deposits of Satan's deception be removed from your vessel. Then, keep it clean and pure before the Lord.

Finally, drink only the pure water of the Word and avoid the writings of men, unless it be that the Lord would – instruct you to read Certain things. There are those whom the Lord has raised up with a message for this hour, but they are *very* few. Most writings of men contain such a mixture of truth and error that they can only result in confusion. Therefore, let the Lord fill your vessel with the pure water of the Word. If you will do this, His Spirit shall teach you and your vessel will be full and overflowing. In this way, you shall become ready to be used by the Lord as an instrument in His hand, for the vessel and the instrument are one. First, you should prepare a vessel fit for the Master's use; then you may become an instrument in His hand.

So many want to be instruments, but they are unwilling first to become prepared vessels. Because of unwillingness to yield wholly to the Lord, He can use them very little. The land is full of unprepared vessels who want to be instruments, but there are few who are willing to become vessels prepared (*Matt. 6:33*). So continue to seek the Lord that He might reveal Himself, and think not that you can become a mighty instrument, until first He has prepared you as a vessel.

Laodicea

: 14 The final Letter of the seven was given for The Church of Laodicea and, in this case also, the name pictures its condition. Laos means laymen and dicea means opinions of right or justice, "just people." The characteristic of this Church is a "righteous showing" through man-developed organization displaying a high code of ethics. The Church of Laodicea portrays the *final* era of the Christian dispensation and the prevailing conditions extant in the man-organized church world.

Jesus is presented as the faithful and true Witness in contrast to the unfaithfulness

and distorted witness in this final period. He is also presented as the beginning of the creation or original formation of God, because of the inception of the new thing He will do as this Laodicean era comes to a close. God will raise up a mighty witness in the remnant being called out of the Babylon church systems and that group will manifest the power and glory of the new creation coming into being through Christ's resurrection life. He is the Firstborn among many brothers. So eventually there shall be many who will come to the measure of maturity permitting Jesus Christ to unveil them as sons of God, giving them immortality for their physical bodies (*Rom. 1:4; Lk. 20:36; Rom. 8:19,23; II Tim. 1:10*). Some will put on the glory of the celestial, as their bodies are changed into the likeness of His glorious body (*Phil. 3:21*). Others will manifest sonship on the terrestrial plane, having their bodies changed from corruptible to incorruptible (*I Cor. 15:40-42,53-54*). There will be the 144,000 group before the Tribulation, the two witnesses at the beginning of and during the Tribulation, and many thousands at the end of and after the Tribulation who will demonstrate the change from mortal bodies – either into celestial immortal bodies to reside in the heavenlies, or earthly incorruptible bodies to live into the Millennium Age, each one as a manifested son of God.

The word “mortal” means dying from the forces of corruption and decay that are at work in the physical body, eventually making that body subject to death. The word “immortal” means simply not mortal or not dying. In such an immortal or incorruptible body the forces of corruption and decay are no longer at work, and, therefore, that body would continue to live indefinitely in perpetual youth. Such a body would not wear out under the stress of time, as a mortal body does. We have our example in Jesus Christ, for He is the Way. If Jesus had not voluntarily given up His life as a ransom for sinners, He could have continued to live on indefinitely, and could be living today in the same physical body that walked in Palestine over 1900 years ago. The Bible says the wages of sin is death (*Rom. 6:23*) so how could Jesus be subject to death (sin's wages), since He Himself never sinned? Also, if He were mortal at the time of the crucifixion and thus subject to death Himself, He could not have given His life as an effective ransom for others.

Jesus was born of mortal woman, even though virgin born, and He had a physical body which was potentially capable of corruption and death, *if* He had followed in the path of other men (*Heb. 2:14-15*). Because Adam sinned, all have sinned and the result of Adam's sin is passed on through all men (*Rom. 5:12*) – through all except Jesus Who did not sin. Jesus was tested in all points as we are, but did not sin (*Heb. 4:15*). And He fully overcame the world, the flesh and the devil. After His final contest with Satan in the wilderness following His complete baptism, He came forth totally victorious to begin His ministry as a fully manifested Son of God. He was the first human (He constantly used the term Son of Man to indicate His full human maturity) to manifest deathless life in the physical body since Adam and Eve. He completely reversed the effects of their fall and opened up the way for a restored deathless paradise on earth, by yielding up His own sinless life as a perfect ransom (*I Tim. 2:5-6*). Of course, Jesus was also fully Divine by reason of His God-Spirit incarnated. If Jesus had been mortal only, His life's blood could not have atoned for the sins of the world. It was the God-life coursing through his veins that accomplished this cleansing of all, when vicariously spilled on the Cross. But of necessity, it had to be a sinless life that was yielded up, not a life subject to death.

The life is in the blood (*Lev. 17:14*), but physicians also say the blood is the seat of

disease. In fallen man, that “life” in the blood can sustain the physical body only a certain number of years and then it yields to deathworking decay. But when Jesus fully overcame the temptations of the enemy, when He proved Himself the complete master over Satan, the world and flesh desires, His blood stream was changed from potentially corruptible to incorruptible – not yielding to decay and death (*Lk. 4:1-2,13-14,28-30,41*).

Where is this related? Jesus demonstrated this truth in symbolic form by His first miracle at the beginning of His ministry. He came to manifest His glory (*Jn. 2:11*) and He began with this appropriate miracle – the turning of water into wine (*Jn. 2:1-11*). Jesus identified wine with His blood at the Last Supper. **“This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins”** (*Matt. 26:27-28*). Here Jesus is referring to a matured wine when speaking of His blood, because in Palestine the grapes are harvested in September and Jesus was using the wine in the spring – at the Passover time. Fresh grape-juice or new wine has no keeping qualities of its own, and is subject to souring and spoiling; but a matured wine has been changed so that it has indefinite keeping qualities and can also preserve whatever is immersed in it. Fresh grape-juice or new wine (beginning to ferment) is a type of the blood in a mortal which is subject to spoilage, death and putrefaction. Common human blood courses with the desires of the flesh, typified by the natural sugars in the grape. But the blood of an immortal is typified by fully matured wine, in which the sugars have been transformed into spirit. The blood of Jesus did not course with sin, neither was it subject to corruption and death. His blood, like matured wine, had keeping-qualities and was able to cleanse and preserve things *immersed* in it.

Jesus not only performed this first miracle to show symbolically what had taken place in His own physical body, but also to show that this would be available to others through His vicarious atonement (*Eph. 2:4-5*). This miracle, a parable in living drama, took place on the third day (*Jn. 2:1*), and with God a day is as a thousand years (*II Pet. 3:8*). Because that generation to which Jesus came failed to believe fully in His finished redemption and failed to appropriate the deathless immortality for the physical body then available, a period of “wilderness wandering” was decreed. This period is pictured in a number of places in the Bible as approximately two “days” or two thousand years. However, the miracle shows that on the third “day,” after 2000 years, the way would *again* be opened for an entrance into the Promised Land of immortality in human flesh. We are well into the period incepting the third “day,” when as many as qualify are going to experience *full* salvation (*I Thess. 5:23, Heb. 9:28*). As this was the first sign of that era, so also it is to be the first sign of power in the new era.

In the miracle-parable, there were six waterpots which Jesus commanded to be filled with water. Six is man’s number and the physical body is referred to as an earthen vessel (*II Cor. 4:7*). Water is a type of the soul within the physical body (*Prov. 27:19, Jms. 1:6-8, Jude 13*), and water is also a type of the cleansing of the Word (*Jn. 15:3, Eph. 5:26*) and the working of the Spirit (*Jn. 7:37-39*). These earthen vessels (waterpots) were filled to the brim with water, indicating a complete work of the Word and the Spirit reaching into the depths of the human soul, until every taint of sin and uncleanness is removed and the full fruit of the Spirit imparted. When this point has been reached, and the individual has fully understood and met the requirements, fully believing that death is no more, then the water is turned to wine. Here is pictured a transformation of the soul elements (water) in the human (6) bodies (earthen waterpots) to those of an incorruptible bloodstream (wine) and the result is immortality in human flesh.

Although an immortal in human flesh cannot die, in the sense that mortals do, yet the life of an immortal can be yielded up for God's purpose, if He so decrees it. Jesus said, "No man takes My life, I lay it down Myself" (*Jn. 10:18*). An immortal is under the absolute protection of God and nothing can happen to him unless permitted by God. It would have been impossible for anyone to have killed Jesus, had He not willingly yielded up His life. Even on the Cross He did not die until He personally dismissed His Spirit into the hands of the Father (*Lk. 23:46*). Then, when His body was in the tomb, it did not suffer corruption (*Acts 13:33-37, Ps. 16:10*). His physical body was loosed from the pangs of death because it was impossible for Him to continue to be controlled or retained by it (*Acts 2:24*). Death had no dominion over Him in the sense that it could not hold Him – not just because He was Divine, but because He was a sinless human not subject to death. He was humanity's first *manifested* Son, with a physical body that tasted death only because *He* laid down that life. As a ransom for sinners He experienced death for each and every human (*Heb. 2:9-11*). Of that first Man to become a manifested Son it was said, "*I knew Him not, but it is in order that He should be made manifest to Israel. . . .*" (*Jn. 1:31*), and "He displayed His glory" (*Jn. 2:11*).

Now, instead of the manifestation of The Son, there is to be the manifestation of the sons (*Rom. 8:19*). The Scripture does not say that all creation is waiting for the glorified Christ to be manifested or revealed from heaven, although that certainly will take place. First there must be an unveiling or uncovering of the end-time sons of God, who will take up a ministry of deliverance to a creation that is groaning and travailing in pain (*Rom. 8:22*). These sons on earth, just a handful in number at the close of the Tribulation, will have probably entered into immortality as Jesus did when He walked upon the earth. After the rebellion of *Genesis 3:22*, man was not permitted to eat of the Tree of Life, lest He should live forever in human flesh. When Jesus Christ came as man to further develop His Divine plan for man; He came as the first Man Who would open the way to deathless life again and to impart the way. Now again, man is permitted to eat of the Tree of Life which is the very life of Jesus Christ, to Whose image we are to be conformed so that He might be the first Son among many sons (*Rom. 8:29*).

: 15-16 Insipid lukewarmness showing no evidence of the Lord's control and empowerment, is the chief characteristic of the Church in this end-time and He spews the entire man-organized Church out of His mouth, both Catholic and Protestant. This does not mean He repudiates those individuals who truly believe in Him and are yet in the organized systems; but, before the end comes, they must hear His call. "*Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues*" (*Rev. 18:2-8, Isa. 48:18-20, Jer. 50:6-9*).

: 17-19 A contributing factor to the spiritual lukewarmness of the present day church world is the prosperity which abounds in most western nations. A feeling of smug complacency has blinded the churches to their spiritual poverty and their desperate need. Clothed in their own selfrighteousness, they know not their nakedness in God's sight. Therefore He has raised up messengers to expose and rebuke the carnality, apostasy and ineptness of the spiritually destitute churches. God is calling for repentance in action – not just emotion. He is moving in His providence to bring chastening through adverse conditions in civil life and international affairs. Conditions will become so severe that the people of predominately Christian nations will either repent or perish. It is because of God's great love for those who do not know their folly and its consequences that He rebukes and chastens (*Heb. 12:5-9*). Those who are asleep and

on the path to destruction, He must waken; otherwise there would be no hope.

There is a great need now for three things which the Lord offers:

1. GOLD REFINED IN THE FIRE. Gold is a symbol of true spiritual character in the will, brought about by the working of His Spirit (developed through our acts of cooperation) and refined in the crucible of testing experiences (*1 Pet. 1:6-7*). God must have a people who are completely receptive to His workings in their inner being and thoroughly purged of the dross of their own ways.

2. WHITE GARMENTS. These are a symbol of those righteousnesses (plural in the Greek) and purity which only God can impart. Only those who are fully clothed with this raiment can enter into the end-time ministry of the spiritual Body He is raising up (*1 Pet. 4:17-18, Matt. 22:8-14*).

3. EYE SALVE. Only the revelation of the Holy Spirit, giving spiritual sight, can cause men to see the mighty truths which God would have them know in this hour. Bible study with and listening to man is not enough. Knowledge is not necessarily revealing (*Heb. 4:2, Rom. 8:2-7*). And since His counsel is to *buy* these from Him, there is a price that must be paid. For you, that price is simply total willingness to let Jesus Christ have your life to train you in His plan as He pleases; only in complete yielding *and conformance* can He be the means of bringing to your life pure gold, imparting to you white garments, and anointing your eyes to see His truth.

:20 This is the day that Jesus is offering to make Himself real to people as never before in history, and He longs to have the intimate communion described in this verse. But so few want to invite Jesus in to take complete control of their lives (*Jn. 15:4-5*). To those who will open their hearts and let Him have His way in them, He is ready to show Himself strong in their behalf. No other generation has had as great an opportunity as He offers in this hour. He stands at the door (the door of the Church and the door of the Christian) and knocks; the choice is yours. In these last days, all who call upon themselves the "name" of the Lord (His nature, character and authority) shall be saved (*Acts 2:21; Jn. 14:21,23*).

:21 The final promise to overcomers in the seven Letters is that they will sit on the Throne of Jesus Christ with Him, through the same process by which He overcame and was seated with His Father on His throne. Even though Jesus was the Son of the Highest, functioning on the plane of Deity, He emptied Himself and took on the form of man, that He might overcome as a man (*Phil. 2:5-9, Heb. 2:14-15*). He overcame and then was highly exalted and given a place of rulership on the Throne of His Father. And He became the pattern for all those who would love the Lord God and let Him bring them into an overcoming experience of rising above the spiritual level of most Christians. In the most earthly application, we should strive to be perfect partners, in business and at home. This implies a correct, kindly and honest relationship with all we contact. We should reach out in an earnest effort to help and hasten the perfecting of the Body of Christ and the Body of Christians. (The Scripture "Body of Christ" refers only to the Firstfruits, 144,000, Bride of Christ.)

To overcome means to absolutely control and to rise above, to come up over to a higher spiritual plane, but it comes only through greater yielding and submission to His will. The time is now at hand when Jesus Christ sits upon the Throne of His glory in the heavenly Kingdom, set up in the realms surrounding the earth. Then shall the Bride sit

on that Throne with Him. And 3 ½ years later, the *overcomers* of the past 2000 years will be exalted as kings and priests to be His administrators over the earth (*Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:4*). Truly this is the PRIZE of the high calling, both joint heirship on the plane of glorified life and joint rulership with Christ in His Kingdom. This seventh promise consummates the overcoming cycle, placing the Firstfruits *overcomer* beside the Throne of Christ, sharing His life.

Yet there is something of an anomaly to be seen and understood here, for this is the Letter to the seventh Church which involves the Bride. In a limited application, the seventh Letter is to those in the 100-fold category, and it promises establishment on the Throne for those in the 100-fold *estate*, if they continue to overcome. They must remain in the purity attained at the event of Holy Spirit Baptism. Yet it must be understood that the promises to those in the seventh Church can be attained *without* the full scope of the requirements on the sixth level having been satisfied, or even the full measure of several of the preceding ones. In fact, the sixth level goes far beyond that of the seventh. The number 7 links with the Bride and with her strong and insatiable love for the Lord Jesus Christ. When that *deep* love is attained, that one is confirmed in his or her direction and can then be trusted to continue in training, having lost all appetite for the things of the world. That one can then be trusted to remain faithful, having gone through a sufficient testing and proving. She will remain virgin, even though she may still have some character flaws and weaknesses. She may have a flaring temper. She may have an uncontrolled appetite. Or she may yet be selfish and unloving in her initial reactions. While in him who has reached the *fullness* of the sixth Church level, there is *no* flaw to be found. The Bride does not need to have all the character traits and intellectual capabilities of, say, a Prime Minister. His qualifications must vastly transcend hers. She is picked for her all-consuming love for her Husband. She is picked out from the whole school, just because of that. But once with Him, she can and will learn from Him and become fully capable in every assignment He has for her.

He who is able to hear (every Christian of 60-fold or better), let him hear and obey what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

Summary of the Church Eras

The people of today and of this age are like those of old who turned from their God to idols. They are like Aaron who made a golden calf for the people, because their hearts were set to respond to their own desires. The idols of gold and silver which the people of this day have made to themselves are the fruits of their desire. The people have sought out those who, like Aaron, have listened to their desires, instead of hearing the voice of the Lord. In this application, Aaron represents the religious leaders of today who have made idols for the believers to worship – “the rapture,” the “name” Church, the preacher, the building, etc. They have gone after that which satisfies the desire of the eye and the pride of life. They have erected that which is pleasing to fleshly pride in making themselves vast systems and organizations which exalt the pride of man and give glory to the works of man’s hands. Therefore, the indignation of the Lord has come up into His face and He is about to bring judgment on the idolatrous systems of man, because “Aaron” has submitted to the desires of the people and has led them astray. Therefore, the Lord God will bring to an end all which Aaron symbolizes today and all his idols, for the day of His judgment is near at hand.

Aaron (meaning enlightened) was among those called up to the holy Mountain to behold the glory of God. His sons, Nadab (liberal) and Abihu (He is my father – prideful fundamentalist) were present also, and they all beheld the glory with Moses and the 70 Elders (*Ex. 24:9-11*). This event pictured what God brought about at the beginning of our own age, when He poured out His Spirit (*Acts 2:16-17*). He caused His chosen ones to behold Him, to enter into the glories of His presence and power, and to eat of the good things of the Word and the Covenant. Soon, however, the desires of the flesh began to creep in, and the aspirations and pride of life began to ferment. Shortly, a decline from the spiritual peak which Jesus Christ brought about at Pentecost set in among those who were recipients of His Covenant. After a period of time, idolatry began to take root in the hearts of the people, and they clamored for something more tangible. Also, in Aaron’s pattern, men who aspired to be something in the eyes of the people began to come to the fore. The result was a gradual turning away from the pure Word and teachings of the Apostles, and to the forming of the creeds and doctrines (teachings) of men. Following this came the actual fulfillment of the apostasy of Aaron; and the idolatrous system of the Church-State combination was formed, Catholic and Protestant. This combination is the golden calf which was made by the priesthood to keep the people in bondage to the spirit of Egypt, and to lead them away from the Truth.

Then came the time for judgment, and down from the Mount came Moses (meaning “drawing out”), as a type of Christ. His absence accounted for the lapse of the people, for they said they did not know what had become of him (*Ex. 32:1-4*). This record prophetically pictured the time when Jesus was taken up into the heavenly mountain (the Kingdom) to remain with the Father, for it was after His ascension that the people lapsed into idolatry. It was during His absence that the forces of evil took over, but, true

to the pattern, the Lord shall return to judge His people. He is even now coming in Spirit to bring recompense to His adversaries and to call a people to Himself. He is now raising up those who will use the Sword to bring division in the camp (*Lk. 12:51-52*). Without the ferment of division, His purpose cannot be accomplished, and so into the religious camps He will send those who are prepared to wield His Sword of judgment.

As Aaron pictured the religious idolatry of this day, so has the Word been patterned to portray what subsequently takes place. Those who are gathered to the Lord are typified by the Levites who stood with Moses at the gate of the camp (*Ex. 32:26-27*). The Levites, in this application, pictured the end-time Body which shall separate itself from the idolatry of the people and will yet stand with Jesus Christ. And He will use them effectively.

The rewards promised to overcomers in the seven Assemblies of called-out ones are progressive awards for having reached certain levels as each overcomer continues in his spiritual development. Not all will reach candidacy for every award, but the potential is open to each and every person to begin his spiritual growth and follow through to the glory that is of Christ.

The promises are made to those with a singleness of hearing (who have a "single" ear, not ears), those who are responsive to the Light into Life. There are very specific promises directed at each of the seven Church eras to the individuals living in the respective era. And in the conclusion of the concluding age of the series of ages, the promises are to those individuals who overcome the particular weakness associated with the Church which specifically represents his weakness or condition.

1. Ephesus speaks to us today of that which is desirable and also permissible. All things which are desirable and permissible are not necessarily in the best interest (*I Cor. 6:12*). In business, it might be quite within the law and seem at the moment desirable to take an opportune but undue advantage, but the fact of it being-lawful would not make the action ideal in the sight of God. Husband and wife might find it lawful, desirable and permissible to live a life of license, yet that is not the ideal in the sight of our perfect Savior. In these letters, Jesus Christ is speaking primarily to those who will hear His Word and who will in real hearing align themselves with its truth. He speaks of overcoming as an absolute conquering of the "desirable" illusions of the senses. To the beginning overcomer, the one who conquers, He will give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Unless there is a repentance for having left the primary Love, for yielding to the desirable and relegating God to second place, the light of understanding is removed. How completely human desires rule the lives of modern Christendom! The beginning overcomer will store up and preserve Christ's own life and righteousness imparted to those who receive Him in faith. Those yielded to Christ in love and obedience will experience joys and blessedness, which the fruits of righteousness and the Spirit's work in their inner being bring forth in profusion. The "garden" of the overcomer's human body becomes the paradise (*I Cor. 3:9*) where Divine Life is at work (*I Pet. 1:23*), watered by the Word (*Eph. 5:26*) and the Spirit, and quickened by the warmth of reciprocated love (*Jn. 14:21*). The Christian who dies a drunkard has not overcome his desire for that which is lawful and, therefore, does not enter into the first covenant.

2. Other Christians harboring hatred within their hearts have become embittered, which is the implication we receive from the word "Smyrna." The embittered hatred

precludes them from entering into Life which cannot in any way be exposed to a second death. Unless you forgive your enemies their mistakes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive yours. That is a call out of bitterness. Unforgiven sin precludes that Life; hatred and the Kingdom life have nothing in common. But Christians who progress beyond the overcoming of carnal desires and into the next stage of overcoming are promised a crown of life. Those who will progress beyond the initial believing in Christ's vicarious atonement for their sins, who remain constant in *the* Faith they have received, and who have stood up to the tests of trial and temptation are to receive an authoritative life which the second death cannot touch (*Jms. 1:12, Jn. 10:28*). The Crown of Life promised is life on a plane of higher attainment, a life in immortality either in place of or after a first death of the physical body. Though it is not a promise of a glorified life such as Jesus Himself now has, it is undying life on the earth planet which will permit the overcomer to advance to the next steps in overcoming as rapidly as he is able and willing. Escape from the second death is possible only by being "born anew" of the incorruptible seed (*Rom. 6:21-23, 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 1:23*). When Jesus' own life is imparted to the soul, it is forever free from death and the eventual restoration of the physical body is also assured, if it has been laid down in death. When the "Lake of Fire" is activated, resulting in the second death for both body and soul, these overcomers shall have no part in it (*Rev. 20:12-15, Matt. 10:28*). In a limited application, the promises under 1, 2 and 3 are to those in the 30-fold category and are conditioned upon the 30-fold's proceeding on and into the 60-fold level.

3. Yet other Christians, who may be born rich or perhaps beautiful, are enfolded in pride and vanity. These are of the Pergamos Christian type. Pergamos means "the heights." The Church entered this era when it became "married" to the Roman State and attained the heights brought about by that union. Unless this pride and vanity is absolutely conquered, the Lord proclaims that one shall not be given the *hidden* manna to eat. To overcomers hungry for more, there is a promise bringing the Spirit of revelation (hidden manna) with truths of the living Word on a new level. At this level, Christ's courtship is started to win His Bride to stand beside Him (*beginning* at Holy Spirit Baptism). A prize (white stone) is promised to the one who has run the course victoriously. In its preliminary application, the white pebble is the immortal seed from Christ's body, wholly structured in righteousness (white). In a further application, the white stone with a new name on it refers to being clothed in white, with a new nature (*Rev. 3:4-5, 18, 7:9, 19:7-8, 14*). The whiteness of the stone indicates the purity of life (enabled by Christ) which marks those who will enter the realm where they will see Him and be in *constant fellowship* with Him. The new name on the stone is symbolic of the new realm of glory which will be inherited by those who go on to attain to the prize of the high calling (*Phil. 3:14-15*).

All this is to fulfill for the 30-fold, *if* he continues on into the 60-fold and 100-fold and into the respective maturings within each higher-fold. As he is changed or transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit, his "name" or nature is altered and he is progressively clothed in white (righteousness).

Few, very few believers with traditional Church persuasions will accept these truths stated by Christ. It is because Christendom, as yet, has not arrived at an understanding of the scope of "salvation." Not yet will Christendom believe the Word of Jesus Christ that the good seed brings forth 30-fold, *and* some 60-fold *and* some 100-fold. A careless and self-indulgent Christendom will not yet spend the time and effort to study out

the truth-content of the Word, but listens only to what another irresponsible “child” insists is or might be the Word of God; and he is deprived of knowledge and cheated out of the rewards of blessing. “Salvation” is *not* the prize of the heavenly calling. Salvation is exclusively the lifting of the death sentence. It is preservation. The man who remains in sin shall die a death in both physical body and soul garment. The 30-fold have not progressed to the permanent possession of eternal life, but will be given a chance to do so on earth during the Kingdom era opening *after* the Millennium. The 60-fold shall also have their lot here on earth, not in heaven, participating in the earth-based Kingdom. Only the 100-fold will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, ever to be with Him – which alone speaks of the heavenly Kingdom.

The mental acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, together with its corollary code of ethics, constitutes a person a 30-fold believer. Today most believers in Christendom are 30-fold, hemmed in by the “law” of their code of ethics. Like Israel in Egypt, the 30-fold believer must dwell within the blood-sealed house throughout his time of darkness and “until the morning” light is seen, lest he be cut down by the death-angel. He has no Life but only the promise to be given a chance to go “3 days journey into the wilderness” to there *worship* God. During and because of that testing, some will enter into the “rest” of the Lord while others fail. Those who do hear His Word, transferring *the* Faith from the head into the heart (soul), are impregnated with Christ’s “incorruptible Seed,” and enter Life (**Jn. 5:24, I Pet. 1:23, Rom. 6:23**). They *have* then passed from death into Life. They then are in the 60-fold and shall enjoy their blessed lot here on earth *within* the Kingdom boundaries. Beyond this step, those who are ambitious to absolutely conquer, yearning to become like their precious Lord and Saviour so that their life will demonstrate a reflection of His glory, are the ones moving toward the 100-fold. The 100-fold is reached through utter consecration to the Lord’s ways and purposes. When that dedication is truly in place, God places His seal upon that one – evidenced by the Holy Spirit Baptism *with Fire*.

Attending Church and going to Bible class is proper and helpful. Being honest is your duty, and doing the best you can is commendable, yet none of these constitutes “overcoming.” But when the liar *lives* truth and the thief *lives* honesty and the whoremonger *lives* virtue, then there are specific cases of overcoming. Overcoming speaks of *full* commitment to Truth received. It is to the overcomers alone that the glorious covenants are spoken and offered.

4. To the overcomer who goes on in eagerness to live by the every Word of God, meaning the wholeness of that Word, there are further promises. Thyatira means many sacrifices. The overcomer of the Church in Thyatira absolutely conquers the soulish pressures of the religious and political systems of the world to tolerate the “woman Jezebel” and her leading into spiritual adultery. This is the overcomer who has determined *not* to sacrifice himself into compromise for the sake of being acceptable in the eyes of man. This is the overcomer who has searched out the purity of *the* Faith as it has been presented by Yahweh-Jesus in both the Old and New Testament and has kept it pure, in spite of continued tampering by the “woman Jezebel” (**Lk. 18:8**). The Lord searches the mind and the heart (soul) and then evaluates the response to the purity of the Word, before distributing His rewards.

To the overcomer, who goes on and keeps *His* commands and does *His* works to the end, and who refuses to tolerate compromise of Truth in any form, is promised a posi-

tion in the heavenly government. It is for rule in authority with power, but with no compromise. These that then have been translated into glorified bodies will be able to appear and disappear on earth. They will speak God's Word and enforce His judgments with the Father's authority. They will shepherd the nations which will follow Him, but will implement the Lord's will among the rebellious nations as with a rod of inflexible iron. These will also be given the "Morning Star" and become an exceedingly bright light in a world that is at the end of a long period of darkness. Theirs will be a ministry of preparation for the coming of the brilliant light of understanding and righteousness which will prevail during the next age and beyond.

In a limited application, the promises to 4, 5 and 6 are to Christians in the 60-fold *category* who are determined to advance into the 100-fold and its maturing lessons.

5. Sardis refers to the remnant which escapes from the bondage of today's ecclesiastical systems and their linkage with the political and economic systems. But after the taste of freedom, it is a common weakness to coast on the attainments realized. There is the tendency for many to become "parking lot" Christians, either in the parking lot of initial salvation or that of many charismatics. In those lots are also the backsliders. There, the backsliders risk loss in standing, even that brought through Holy Spirit Baptism, once it has been attained. In the case of such loss, they are limited to mortality on earth; and the record having to do with the physical body in the Book of Life has to be adjusted. To the overcomer who maintains his eagerness to progress is the promise of white garments (purity in both soul and body) on earth. And at this point of overcoming on earth, there then will be no subsequent backsliding and danger of loss of status. This full overcomer is promised a higher position in government than the overcomer of compromise alone. He will walk with the Lord Jesus in white and be recommended to His Father.

Before the Lord comes as a thief in the night for His special Treasure, the Jewels who make up the 144,000 company will have come into the 100-fold level of overcoming and maintained it. They shall walk with Him in white in the heavenlies. Later many who had not similarly attained will so attain and qualify for the fifth covenant. They too will receive glorified bodies and they too shall walk with Him in white. The later ones will not be of the Bride company which preceded them, but they shall walk with Him in white and occupy high position in His government.

6. The Church of Philadelphia today is comprised of those who have a love for the others of the loving heavenly Father's family. This love has to do with making the Gospel of the New Covenant available to the other children so that they too can take advantage of its benefits into maturity. But only the portions of the New Covenant can be clearly presented which are clearly understood by the one presenting. Therefore, the ambitious one should exercise exceeding care and be attentive, watchful, and alert so as not to be seduced by part-truth, and led away and lose the crown of authority with power (*Matt. 24:24*). Jesus spoke of this when He questioned whether He would be able to find *the* Faith He presented anywhere on earth at the conclusion of the age (*Lk. 18:8*). The weakness of the Philadelphia Church of today is that of having little power. But to the one who overcomes carelessness and spiritual slumber is the promise of being permanently placed as a pillar in the Sanctuary of the Father of our Lord, the High Father.

The attainers in the 60-fold category will make up the earthly reflection of that estab-

lished with the 100-fold in the heavens above (*Matt. 6:10*). The 60-fold who advances himself into 100-fold overcoming will receive his assignment in the celestial Sanctuary. That overcomer will have been tested and proven and accepted and endorsed by the High Father for an *exalted* position in the New Jerusalem governmental responsibility.

Here again, those who have come to and gone through this stage of overcoming shall inherit the promises attached to each respective level of the overcoming. All who endure in loyalty, with patience and expectation, will be protected from the perils of The Great Tribulation. Those who go as far as the 60-fold status in their overcoming will be kept safe during those 3 1/2 years of peril. Those who quickly continue into and through the 100-fold level of overcoming will be taken out of the world scene before the Tribulation begins, escaping the perils. It is the 144,000 Firstfruits group which will be physically removed by translation into glorified bodies, before the hour of trial starts (*Lk. 21:36, Rev. 14:4-7*). Subsequently, those who faithfully keep God's Word and put complete trust in Christ during the Great Tribulation on earth will receive full protection and guidance all through that 3 1/2 years.

All who hunger for *complete* overcoming and the *fullness* of the rewards offered are promised a spiritual power ministry on earth by the sealing with the Name of Christ while still on earth and, when in glorified bodies, by the sealing with the Name of "My God," which is acceptance by the High Father. Those taken up are then to receive the sealing or endorsement of the attributes necessary to reside in the New Jerusalem, and also the sealing with the power-potential to reign and rule with Jesus Christ (by the sealing with My own new Name). Each of these scalings brings a new level of authority and power – and also responsibility with Divine support. These so sealed, on earth or in heaven, reflect the Father's image as a grown-up son, a finished product of the earth-school.

7. The Laodicean Church of today consists of all believers who present themselves as the righteous or just people. They present a front of self-righteousness for show among men. They stand for a high code of ethics and erect a high standard of justice. Yet they are eager to take maximum advantage where it is presented, even undue advantage, as long as they think they can get away with it. This is modern Christendom. It has reverted to the same weakness as in the Church of Ephesus, only on a higher "octave" – the satisfaction of desire as long as it can be made to appear lawful. We verbally support the laws we have established to mete out justice. We proclaim that honesty is the best policy. Yet within so many is that rapacious waiting for the opportunity to "take" another person. It is of us that the Lord speaks as being lukewarm toward Him. We too have left the first priority, Love. Our spiritual apathy in lukewarmness, He detests. Our outward display of honesty, He abhors. Therefore, it is *this* generation which is to be spewed out of His mouth into The Great Tribulation!

All who are now alive are drawn to becoming lukewarm towards God, but there are some who will overcome and qualify for the consummating promise of the series. The 7th promise is only to the 100-fold category: If you will recognize the delusions of your indulgent doctrines, and if in contrition of heart you seek the Lord for white raiment to hide your nakedness, and if you will recognize that He requires a *fervently* honest motivation and an *absolute* conquering of the besetting failings of your generation, then He will invite you and permit you to sit on His Throne *with* Him. If you will abide totally in Him and permit Him to do the same with you, there will be close communion and the

eating of the *same food*. To those who so make themselves ready in time, is the promise of sitting on His Throne with Him, a *most* exalted position in the Kingdom, as the Bride of Christ. Those in governmental position appear *before* the Throne of the Lord (*Rev. 7:9*). Only those of the Bride company appear *with* Him on His Throne (*Rev. 12:5, 14:1*).

The seven levels of promises to the seven Churches are a display of the seven-fold goodness of man's exalted Keeper. They are covenanted to the overcomer as he moves toward completion of the initial cycle of seven. Then that completion is followed by the eighth covenant to the overcomer, the consummation of all into that of Sonship. That one is servant no longer, but is trained to take up junior partnership in the Father's business (*Rev. 21:7*).

Here we need to note again that the seventh level promises can yet be attained without having mastered the full scope of the sixth level of overcoming, or even the full measure of several of the preceding levels. The reason for what appears to be permission to skip steps (but is not in any sense) links with the quality of consuming love, the love a Bride has for her Husband. When such a deep and all-pervading love is present, the quick accomplishment of all the other overcomings is assured. The exclusive direction taken by the Bride who so loves is solely towards the heavenly Husband; therefore, she can be trusted to remain faithful to Him and set apart from the world. It then becomes only the matter of a short time to learn the practice of all that is required of her as a seventh level overcomer.

Each of the promises is associated with a command from the Lord to those who hear. "Let him hear and obey what the Spirit says to the Churches." The Greek word for "hear" also means "obey." Those who obey the Lord qualify for possession of the promises; those who overlook conformance do not qualify.

Prophecy in Scripture has much to say about judgment that comes as a result of taking excursions off the path which the Lord has put before His people. This warning is seen all through the Old Testament and also in the New. The pictures of judgment are shown for example, in Isaiah and in Jeremiah as applying in the Old Testament years but also in the New Testament years which extend to our times and the end of the age. But the pictures are shown for particular application to this end-time in the Book of Revelation and in the parallel passages of the other New Testament Books. Even among those who are trusting and relying on the Lord, it is so easy to find one's attention focused on the judgments, even, in some cases, to the exclusion of the many attractive promises and great rewards which God has ready to *shower* upon His people through Jesus Christ. Such concentration of attention is an expected human response to a premonition of judgment, but it is a wrong response from His followers; it is not the Lord's intention *for us*, if we do follow Him (*I Jn. 4:18, I Thess. 4:3-6*).

We should know it is wrong because the Scripture is full of the favor, generosity, empowerment and protection which God has ready for those who will follow Him wherever He leads and who will be willing to trust Him in every development. These favors and gifts and rewards are offered not because any Christian has himself earned them through his own efforts and inherent abilities. They are offered only because he is willing to enter into God's plan for him and to let God work out the experience of his having and using them, as he trustingly follows God's programming. *Christians* will not be judged for sins, because He has taken the sins of the world upon Himself (*Jn.*

1:29). But we will be evaluated for what we have done in union with Jesus, by how much we have eagerly taken of all The Truth He offers and by how willingly we have applied that for maturing His Body on earth.

The Lord is calling to all men in this day. He is coming to His people in a way that has not been experienced before. He is preparing those who will listen to His Word and conform, for the Great Day is at hand. However, there are many who will not hear His voice and neither will they respond to what the Lord is making known. Why will people not listen and let Him prepare them for what is just ahead? Why will they turn more and more to their own ways? What has the Lord done that His people should not want to know Him and follow in His ways? Has He not done everything in His power to make people realize His great love for them? Has He not showered His blessings upon those He loves? Has He not been very patient and merciful? In truth, we are now witnessing the extremity to which His patience and mercy can go without intervention and judgment.

We are witnessing the fullness of time in this Age of Grace, during which His grace is being extended to the very limit. The day is even now pressing in on the world when judgment must intervene, because His people have not been moved by His mercy and grace towards them, but have hardened their hearts to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, for those who will truly seek the Lord in this time of human degeneracy, He will prepare a banquet heaped with wonderful things. He will cause them to enter into all of that abundance and they shall be blessed by the riches of His grace extended to them. The blessings which have been shunned by the many shall be poured out upon the few who seek the Lord, and they shall have abundance; but from those who seek Him not, even that which they have or think they have shall be taken.

The Lord proclaims that He is ready to do a work that you would not believe if it were told you. He is ready to do a mighty work, but through a prepared people. He is ready to bring the Age of Grace to a climactic close by pouring out His love and blessings and power upon those who are to be the supreme exhibits of His gracious mercy – those upon whom He is going to dote in this end-time. All men are to know that truly His abundance in grace and kindness is upon those who will turn from their own ways and seek Him. All the world will see at this time of consummation that Jesus Christ is God, Who keeps His Word and fulfills all that He has declared. If you will seek Him with *all* your heart, with all your personal desires realigned, He will truly make Himself known to you and will bring you into realms which have been reserved for this day. Much, very much, has been reserved. Tremendous things are being prepared for those who are to manifest the consummation of the Lord's purpose for this time. So awaken, and get in on the great and glorious day ahead. He will make the way plain, *if* you will heed His voice.

Awake and arise. Do not be content to dwell in the dust of your carnal ways. Shake loose from all that has held you captive (*Isa. 52:1-3*). Arise and look at the inheritance prepared, for the Lord is ready for His people to see it. He is giving them reason to arise and enter in. His people have been bound by the traditions of men long enough. He is readying a people to enter fully into His righteous ways, and His preserving power shall uphold them and provide everything they need (*Matt. 6:33*). So arise. The day of your deliverance is at hand.

Truly a people shall return to Zion (the monumental pillar or waymark) and rebuild

the waste places and the former desolations. They shall be called the repairers of the breach (*Isa. 58:10-14*). In this day, a remnant is returning to the ways of their God, and shall magnify the Lord in all that is done. Therefore, the Lord calls you to listen and hear. Let Him show you in His Word by the revealing of His Spirit what He purposes in our time. Begin to realize what is your right and inheritance in Christ. Realize and know that Christians are living far below their covenant rights. They have barely begun to enter into all that was made available by the sacrifice of Christ when He once-for-all confirmed the Covenant of eternal redemption. Will you not let Him open your eyes to behold what is yours? Perceive what He is making known to those who will listen and conform to His Word.

Awake and let the Lord show you the mighty strength of your God. Behold the mighty arm of the Lord. Even now He is ready to move on the behalf of those who will awaken out of their lethargy and call upon Him. Arise and possess your heritage. Why will you remain in the bondage and limitation of your former traditions? Why will you not shake loose and forget all that has blinded you and held you back? Enter into the revelation which the Lord is making available in *this* hour (*Eph. 5:14; Isa. 51:1,9-11, 52:1-2,11-12; Jer. 50:4-9; Rev. 18:2-5*).

Early in His ministry of power with authority, Jesus laid down the pattern of earthly living for as many as will choose to follow Him and inherit everything now made ready in the Kingdom of heaven. Included in His Sermon on the Mount is the admonition that each person first seek out two things for himself. One of these is the rule of Jesus Christ over all the facets of his life. The other is the practice of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the practice of conforming to God's plan in thought, attitude, purpose and action. The two are interlinked. Jesus also said that after these two things were put into practice, the other things which are needful for progress toward the full inheritance would be added (*Matt. 6:33*). Do read the Sermon on the Mount again, with a personal application in mind.

When anyone is ready to believe Jesus Christ is the One sent to bring Life to him, saving him from death, and is continuously eager to hear and understand and apply His words of Life, a heart union with Jesus Christ is formed (*Jn. 5:24, Rom. 10:9-10*). A rebirth or regeneration takes place. Then a positive pull toward His righteousness is experienced. There is no other way to recognize and be sure of the change. This also may be viewed as a new conception through the planting or impregnating with the immortal seed of Jesus Christ (*1 Pet. 1:23*). By this impregnation, a new life is initiated (*Rom. 6:22-23*). Once planted, the immortal seed is intended to grow. As with a seed planted in the garden, the immortal seed will grow, providing it is kept in fertile soil and receives regular watering, light and warmth (*1 Cor. 3:9*). The fertile soil is provided by the determination to learn and live the wholeness of God's Word. He offers nothing we don't need for growth in His pattern. The regular watering is applied by the continuous use of the Word (*Eph. 5:26, Jn. 15:3*). The light is initiated by the clarification of the Word and new revealing from it by the Holy Spirit (*Jn. 14:26*). The warmth is generated by Christ's love and by reflecting His light and love back to Jesus Christ through other brothers and sisters (*Jn. 13:34-35, 15:12*). If even one element is lacking or missing, the growth of the immortal seed within is inhibited or stopped. The seed never dies, but its growth rate will be according to its environment.

It would be difficult to find a portion of Scripture which does not have to do with

growth and development within the plan of God, but let us again review what John understood and wrote on the subject in his letters. John writes of the factors which apply to spiritual offspring as they grow into little children, then into adolescence, and on into an adult relationship with Jesus Christ.

We read in **John 1** that the beginning of Life was the Word. We read in **I John** that, initially, there is to be the partaking of the Word (**I Jn. 1:1-6**) and that Word refers to Jesus Christ Himself. He is the Life and the Light. The partaking begins with the implanting of the immortal seed, a biological event, forming a heart union with Him. The partaking continues during the growing of that seed. The seed bed (the heart) is prepared with a cleansing by His blood from sin and guilt in all its forms, effected by application of the purchase from the world order made by Jesus Christ when He paid out His lifeblood. No man is without the need of this application, because each man has fallen short of Christ's righteousness in thought, attitude, purpose and action (**I Jn. 1:7-10**). In our lives, each of us has known rebellion against His will, but, by His provision, we are or can be cleansed of the effects of the rebellions. In addition, by His provision, none of us need to experience further compulsion from either internal or external forces to continue in rebellion (**Rom. 6:6,11**). We do not need to, if we take up His provision in the way He designed it to be used.

The most vile of sinners can enter His Outer Court and approach toward Him (30-fold) at any time. His life in and out of sin may vary greatly while he is in the Outer Court. But when he enters the Holy Place of regeneration, the 60-fold (he can in almost no time – 43 days), then sin is taboo. The bread of the priests is *unleavened*. If the 60-fold does sin, he must come to a true repentance *before* experiencing further progress toward the final veil and the 100-fold. However, if the 60-fold Christian who tries not to sin does so through weakness, he has an Advocate.

In **I John 2**, the teaching is to the *little* children. Although in those days, they came into Spirit Baptism (100-fold) early in their new life in Christ, yet they were still young in the Word of God. To the *beginner*, John wrote these things so that he *might* not perpetuate rebellious living in any of its forms, that he might no longer violate any of the suggestions, instructions and commandments of the One Who is becoming his personal Ruler.

In short, you don't have to sin any more, if you follow the pattern Jesus Christ prearranged. You may then sin if you choose to or allow yourself to do so; but you are no longer compelled, if you understand how to escape, do escape and then remain free. However, if through weakness you permit yourself to fall short, you still have the Advocate Who is also the propitiation for the sins of all who will accept Him and His enabling (**I Jn. 2:1-2**).

Every kind of seed grows into what it is and only what it is; wheat grain grows to become wheat grass; apple seeds grow to become apple trees. Likewise, the immortal seed grows to become the likeness of "Jesus Christ" within each person receiving the planting. Therefore, the maturing process involves a progressive coming to know Him, as He grows within, becoming better acquainted with Him, His plan and His activity. As that immortal seed is permitted and encouraged to grow, there is also a more and more clear recognition of Him and understanding of His ways. We come to know Him through the process of cooperating with His will. We come to know Him through conforming our thoughts, attitudes, purposes and actions to His plan. We come to

know Him by not sinning anymore – by not sinning at all. We come to know Him by walking and conducting ourselves in the same way in which Jesus walked and conducted Himself (*1 Jn. 2:3-6*). By so conducting ourselves, we can be sure of and can recognize our being fully in Him. As a personal debt to Him for His purchase of redemption, we owe Him that walk. As we abide in Him, so He abides in us (*Jn. 15:4*).

First, there needs to be the rule of Christ in your life and also your conformance to His plan, to insure the other needful things (*Matt. 6:33*). Do you now have questions? How does a man come to a life of not sinning? How can a man come to know Jesus? How can he be fully in Him? How can a man be enabled to conduct himself as Jesus Christ conducted Himself? The answer to the questions, for there is really one answer to all of them, is given in many portions of Scripture. But it has been difficult for man to arrive at the answer by use of his reasoning powers apart from God's Word. Everything man is able to see around him on every side in the material world tends to convince him that there is *no* answer to these questions, at least on earth. The Word of God instructs otherwise.

In all of Scripture, seemingly impossible things were accomplished through naturally limited men by a supernatural anointing. Nothing of lasting value occurred, except as a result of a divine anointing. In the Scriptures, the anointing was usually accompanied by the application of oil, oil being the symbol of the Holy Spirit's work of impartation for effecting the "impossible." Therefore, it would be surprising if John were not also inspired to write of the design and method by which man can come into a life of not sinning, to know Jesus intimately, to become fully in Him, and be enabled to conduct himself as Jesus did.

Through perhaps 200 A.D., it was typical of the early Church that a person receive instruction in two "anointings." These two corresponded to the double anointings of kings and priests in the Old Testament types. The first of the anointings comes at the forming of a heart-union with Jesus Christ when His glorified seed is implanted. This is the gift of or from the Holy Spirit, transmitted by Him into the believer, following true repentance (*Jn. 16:14, 20:22; Acts 2:38*). The second anointing is to come as early as a few days later, after a period of testing and proving of dedication to the Life-plan of Jesus Christ. The second anointing is described as Baptism or immersion in the Holy Spirit, with the Fire of the Spirit being activated for consuming all alien desires then resident within the soul structure. Besides being instructed in the fact of two anointings, a person in those early years also received instruction in how to approach them and how to subsequently maintain their status in daily living experience. Although this typical practice quickly fell into disuse as man more and more arrogated to himself the administration of the Church from the Holy Spirit, the teaching in some measure is beginning to be restored in a few contemporary small groups and in a very few church assemblies.

Paul wrote of the first anointing in Romans 6 to those who had become one with Christ, in unity with Him. They had joined themselves to Him in heart-union and He joined Himself to them through the implantation of His incorruptible seed of absolute righteousness. That is the moment of regeneration, or "re-birth" in Christ (*Rom. 6:5-6*). Those forming a heart-union with Him, in real effect, resign from the rule of the world system under Satan and die to it through the representative death of Christ for them. He paid for their release, so that the system can no longer hold them, once they resign. As a result, they can and should account themselves dead to sin, behave in the newness of

His life, and refuse to sin (*Rom. 6:11,4,12*). But so few know that they can, and even fewer will be that diligent to overcome the old desires and habit patterns.

The second anointing is described as the utter consuming of the old human desire nature which could bear no good fruit (*Matt. 3:10-12, 7:18-19*). Paul wrote that this is like a circumcision, cutting off the "flesh" of human nature in a moment of time, circumcision being a symbol of righteousness (*Col. 2:11-12, Rom. 4:11*). But again, people today do not understand the Lord's work, neither what to expect and implement. And, according to their faith, they do not recognize the experience of that burning away of every tempting desire in their souls.

The primary effect of the first anointing is a release from the compulsion to sin, and an impelling into righteousness, because of the glorified seed of His righteousness then in the heart. The primary effect of the second anointing is the burning out of every alien desire in the heart to release that person from the temptation to sin, because he has exhibited his determination not to do so following the previous anointing.

John wrote to encourage a typical Church Body, containing mostly 100-fold Christians, to be done with sin and to be obedient to the truth as it is revealed to them individually. He reminds them of the Lord's anointing and urges they make themselves ready to stand before the Lord at His coming. Once the anointing and the understanding of the proper application of its potential enabling have been received, a full abiding in Jesus Christ *may* then begin (*I Jn. 2:27-28*). There is an adequate reservoir of enabling for a quick transformation, when there is also a sufficient desire and determination to see it done. Again, what is that full abiding in Him? We can know and recognize we are fully in Him by our conformance to His Word in its entirety, demonstrating the mature love of and for God. The abiding fully in Him is demonstrated by walking as Jesus Christ walked (*I Jn. 2:5-6*). After receiving the anointing, His righteousness (conformity to His plan in thought, attitude, purpose and action;) can then, if earnestly desired, be adequately demonstrated continuously (*Gal. 5:16*). And it then becomes openly evident who is born of God (*I Jn. 2:29*).

But man has always been led to take portions of Scripture and separate them from the whole of Scripture, in order to picture a plan for man which is not God's intent. Because man teaches others that we cannot escape sinning while on this planet, it is necessary to present the fact again. Not only has God provided a very workable and practical way to escape from the compulsion and dominion of sin while on this planet and in the natural-born physical body, but He also *requires* that each man overcome and eliminate outright rebellion in all its forms, before moving into the next stage of growth (*Matt. 5:8, Rev. 22:14*).

In any man's life, it very quickly becomes evident that God's full requirement cannot be met without both possessing the two anointings and properly using what they provide. We are to become conformed to God's plan, fully abiding in Him before His coming, so we may have assurance, and not then be ashamed and shrink from Him (*I Jn. 2:28*). We are to resemble Him *before* seeing Him. Each one who has this hope in His enabling purifies *himself* to be pure just as Christ is pure, not committing sin anymore (*I Jn. 3:2-4*). Purification of one's self is through separation into the Truth, Jesus Christ (*I Pet. 1:22*). No one who abides in Him continues to or habitually sins; but he who practices righteousness is to be righteous, even as Christ is righteous – to the full extent of his understanding and strength.

There are no shadings or gradations in the required righteousness. The commission of sin is from the devil. But the reason for Jesus Christ being glorified in His resurrection body, as the Son of God, was to undo and dissolve the works of the devil, all of them, in anyone believing *into* Him (*Jn. 7:38-39, I Jn. 3:6-8*). All who fully abide in Jesus Christ obey Him, follow His plan, and live His life which is within (*I Jn. 3:24*). His charge to love one another is also fulfilled by living, walking in accordance with, and being guided by His commandments (*II Jn. 6*). Each person must ingest, digest and live the Word of God, or the full abiding is not possible. Without willingness and eagerness to receive all truth that He offers, and without willingness and eagerness to utilize and live what has been received, the full abiding is not possible.

Now, there is one more major question. In an environment conducive to rapid growth, is this learning to fully abide in Him to be derived and practiced in isolation? In God's plan, this is not possible for most, nor is it possible in any plan concocted by someone else. We are complementary members of the Body of Christians, of which He is the Head. We are designed, assigned and enabled to support, aid, and strengthen other members of that Body (*I Cor. 12:11-14, 25-27; Rom. 12:1-8*). God has not chosen to demonstrate His glory and wisdom again exclusively through one individual, but through a corporate Body of dedicated individuals who are cooperatively permitting Jesus Christ to make them like Himself (*Eph. 3:10-11, 4:10-16*). A matured Head on an infantile Body is *not* a completion of *His* plan; therefore, a conforming to His will includes growth *during* an obedient response in doing the work of building the Body (*Rom. 12:9-13, Heb. 10:24-25*). The work of ministering in the direction of building up the Christian Body toward the standard of measurement which is Christ's own fullness and completeness, is to be accomplished between individuals with zeal, aglow with the Holy Spirit. Each member in the Body, if he wants rapid growth, is to meet frequently with others of like mind, watch and study out how to stimulate those others to love and helpful activity, warning, urging, and encouraging others, and all the more faithfully as the day of Christ's coming approaches.

The effective building of the Body of Christians is never by the application of any man's best thought and ability apart from God's Word, or his guesses. The building of the Body is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit as He moves through the cooperating minds and muscles of men who make themselves available to Jesus Christ. It is the Lord Who builds the Church (*Acts 2:46-47*), or the labor is in vain (*Ps. 127:1*). And He has chosen to do His work through the many members of the Body, not just one or two.

For some, this type of participation in building up the Body may require little change in activity, but for most it might mean a rather drastic change in habits, in living patterns, in social involvements, and in gathering to worship. The admonitions call for searching out ways of benefiting those whom we find it difficult to like, as well as those whose company we enjoy. This stewardship, to be effective, calls for the positive attitude of praise, thanksgiving, rejoicing, and listening to discern truth from error – measuring by the Law and the Testimony. But the participation must be in Truth, not just for show at a meeting. Remember, the Spirit works only according to the Word. Faithful stewardship calls for willingness and eagerness in adapting other activity into a pattern useful to the Master.

The intent in this review on spiritual growth is to build an awareness of the Lord's need to work through many Christians, in order to magnify or enlarge His nature and

character (His "name") on the earth and to manifest His glory to the extent He desires. He can utilize no mixture of what is from man with the Truth He offers. Therefore, man's non-conforming sinful nature must be consumed (*Matt. 3:10-11*), before there is room for God's nature to fill the man. Such a transformation can only be effected by a cooperative joining with the plan God devised. Man's best efforts in man's best plan are fruitless or, at best, worthless (*Matt. 7:17-27*).

In order to open the way to rapid spiritual growth, there must be an increasing awareness of need and a willingness to give Christ's imparted word of wisdom to the foolish and rebellious, His word of knowledge to the troubled, His word of prophecy to the down-hearted, His word of faith to those in need of healing and to those who are doubtful. These words may be in the form of formal teaching or informal comment. They do not have to be stylized to be valid. Our Lord yearns to pass the best gifts through you, and He knows which are the best for those to whom you minister. Of course, first there must be a willingness to be used for benefiting the other members of the Body. Then there must be preparation and learning to do so by cooperating with the Lord. Cooperating with the Lord is nothing less than learning and living and revealing His plan for man. Finally, there must be the physical placement in proximity to members of the Christian Body, in an environment which permits free and open ministry at any time, in accordance with the wholeness of God's Word (*Isa. 8:20*). Since the Lord always has and still does operate through chosen leaders, the members of the developing Body will grow most rapidly and accurately if they remain within the oversight and guidance of those who are proven to be *His* elected leaders. However, without qualifying and without frequent participation in the building of the Body which Christ is building, even personal growth in spiritual attainment remains limited or stunted. Without discarding the limitations, prohibitions and traditions of man's church organization, there cannot be the maturing which our Lord now is requiring of those He will use effectively in these last days of our age. Come out, come out of Babylon's plethora of confusion of Truth.